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The Shape of Things

THE BRITISH DECISION TO OCCUPY SYRIA may seem obvious, but clearly it was not adopted without a very careful weighing of risks. The danger to the whole British position in the Middle East if the Nazis secured full military control of this vital region was plain to the most amateur strategist. But it was also necessary to take into account the possibility that invasion of this French mandate would give Vichy an excuse to become a military member of the Axis and to order its navy into action against the British Mediterranean fleet. General Wavell has a huge area to defend with limited numbers of troops and a limited amount of equipment. It was therefore essential to balance the prospects of rapid success in Syria against the risks of a strong Axis offensive in the western desert. One factor, no doubt fully considered, was the evidence of disaffection among the French soldiers in Syria. Interesting particulars on this subject are given on page 688 by Peter Stevens, who was in Syria not many weeks ago. His article also refutes contentions that Vichy remains in independent control of Syria. General Dentz, he shows, has been little more than a voice for the German representatives and has even been unable to check the Nazi propaganda among the Arabs which was steadily undermining all French authority in the two mandates. There is plenty of evidence that in the past few weeks the Germans have not merely taken control of the main Syrian airports but by one means or another have brought in several thousand soldiers. The latest reports suggest that these men are being hurriedly evacuated, partly because the French troops might refuse to fight side by side with them and partly because of the difficulties of supply and reinforcement.

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ALTHOUGH THE VICHY GOVERNMENT HAS reacted to the British invasion of Syria with loud and indignant protests, it now seems improbable that it will forthwith plunge into general war with Britain. This is not because of any tender feelings toward its former ally, for Admiral Darlan has made it clear that Vichy's one desire is to see Britain beaten as quickly as possible. But the hopes of the vast majority of Frenchmen lie in

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the exactly opposite direction, and even a dictatorship cannot easily carry a country into war without some substantial measure of public support. Another factor tending to restrain Vichy's enthusiasm for an all-out alliance with Hitler is President Roosevelt's plain speaking. There is a fear that collaboration between Vichy and the Axis of a kind which would place Germany in open control of the African colonies might precipitate an American move against Dakar and Martinique. It is probable that Berlin is still anxious to avoid a showdown with the United States and is therefore willing to allow Vichy to continue on the present basis of open economic cooperation with the Axis combined with a limited amount of secret military cooperation. There has again been a persistent series of reports about disagreement between Vichy and General Weygand, but these should be regarded with a grain of salt. The belief that Weygand could be counted upon to take independent action if German demands on France became too insistent has been very useful in encouraging Anglo-American appeasement of Vichy. It may be that the Berlin-Vichy strategists hope that this myth can still be effectively employed.

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THE FRENCH PASSENGER LINER WINNIPEG, which was seized by a Dutch naval vessel toward the end of last month, was found to have on board 210 Germans and 76 Austrians who were reported to be bound for Martinique. This statement was hotly denied by the French embassy in Washington, which declared that all passengers with German passports were bound for Latin America, and which implied that they were refugees. We now learn from an American who was in Trinidad the day the Winnipeg was brought in that most of these Germans were young men and believed by the authorities to be under military orders. What their mission in Martinique might be it is easy to guess. They could hardly add any appreciable strength to the garrison of the island, but they could do a skilled job of sabotage on French warships and planes at Fort de France. The extraordinary thing about this affair is the fact that the British authorities in Trinidad have remained completely silent since releasing the first news of the Winnipeg's capture. It seems not to have occurred to them that an attempt to land an organized party of Germans in Martinique is a matter of extraordinary importance, particularly to the United States.

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HITLER IS SAID TO HAVE LAUGHED WHEN John Cudahy, former United States Ambassador to Belgium, now correspondent of the North American Newspaper Alliance, told him that many Americans feared he would carry his aggression to the American continent. The Führer cited the 2,500 miles of open water between Europe and North America as proof of the absurdity of their fears. Hitler also ridiculed the idea that Germany could be an economic menace to the United States. In the course of the interview nothing seems to have been said by either Hitler or Cudahy about South America or Dakar. Mr. Cudahy did not ask, for example, why Germany was pouring shipload after shipload of "tourists" into South America via Lisbon, as was recently reported from first-hand observation by Carl B. Wall in *PM*. Mr. Wall cites a German, perhaps a little more indiscreet than Hitler, as saying that Germany would rather take over South America than all of England. Our suspicion that the Cudahy "interview" was stage-managed to meet the immediate interests of Nazi propaganda is heightened by the parallel between its content and the orders issued by the official German propaganda agency in Berlin, as revealed by President Roosevelt. The first of those orders, it will be recalled, urged all Nazi agents to stress the idea that Germany had no thought of aggression in the Western Hemisphere.

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BATAVIA'S REJECTION OF TOKYO'S DEMANDS has placed the Japanese militarists very much on the spot. The Japanese trade delegation, headed by Kenkichi Yoshizawa, had made sweeping demands for a large share of the island's oil, rubber, tin, and other strategic war materials. After a long period of fruitless negotiation, "final" demands were presented, accompanied by a press barrage that strongly hinted at war if they were rejected. A suspicion that these threats were largely, or wholly, bluff was confirmed when the Dutch authorities stood fast and presented a counter-proposal that gave the Japanese little of what they asked. At first the delegation announced that it had no choice but to break off negotiations. Later, after instructions had apparently been received from Tokyo, it consented to remain, at least temporarily. Meanwhile Tokyo officials have gone into a series of conferences to decide what, if anything, can be done about this unprecedented affront.

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JAPAN'S FINAL DECISION WILL DOUBTLESS hinge primarily on the firmness of American policy. The United States is deeply concerned in the outcome of the affair, for the granting of Tokyo's demands would seriously affect our ability to obtain adequate supplies of tin, rubber, and other strategic materials. And it is fairly obvious that Japan wants these materials not only to strengthen its own military preparations but to enable it to transship vital supplies to Germany. Unfortunately, the critical situation in Europe has led American appeasers, and some non-appeasers, to seize this moment to renew the demand that the fleet be shifted from the Pacific to the Atlantic. It is argued that we must at all costs avoid being engaged on two fronts at the same time, and that the Japanese threats are merely a part of Hitler's strategy to keep our fleet tied up in the Pacific.

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There is no indication that the Administration has been swayed by this special reasoning. Some units of the fleet may, indeed, have been shifted—Washington no longer gives out information on ship movements—but they probably consist solely of destroyers and other light vessels suitable for patrol duty. The speed with which the British tracked down and sank the Bismarck indicates that there is no need for additional capital ships in the Atlantic. But Tokyo has shown in the past that it keeps close tabs on the position of our battleships. If a half-dozen of our larger vessels were suddenly transferred to the Far Eastern fleet, it is probable that Japan's threat to the Dutch East Indies would be quickly abandoned.

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THE OUTCRY AGAINST THE BILL TO DRAFT private property illustrates once again that sauce for the goose is definitely not sauce for the gander. It is true that the original bill was sweeping in character. It would have permitted the President to requisition any private property, upon payment of compensation, if such action was considered necessary in the interest of defense. The President, of course, had no intention of authorizing raids on private homes to pick up aluminum pans or, as was whispered in anti-New Deal quarters, of confiscating all bank accounts over $1,000. Administration leaders merely desired a measure broad enough to meet any contingency. The bill would have given the President roughly the same powers over property as he already possesses over young men under the selective-service law. It paralleled in its scope the provisions of the emergency legislation adopted in Great Britain a little more than a year ago. But it has met with such vigorous opposition—from the same quarters that have been urging the government to crack down on labor—that it will have to be drastically modified before it can be passed. In its modified form it will presumably give the President ample power to take over defense plants in the event of a serious threat to production. The refusal of Congress to put national interests above property interests in the emergency is not likely to sit well with the hundreds of thousands of young men who have given up their jobs and are prepared if necessary to sacrifice their lives in the cause of democracy.

*

THE DECLINE IN AIRPLANE PRODUCTION from 1,427 in April to approximately 1,350 in May is symptomatic of the lag in all defense production. The decline cannot be attributed to labor difficulties, although some newspapers have tried to make it appear so. There were no strikes in airplane plants during May. Labor disputes may have been the cause of some delay among subcontractors, but there is no evidence that this accounts for the drop in production. The chief difficulty is the lack of planning and coordination. The great Boeing plant at Seattle, for example, is at a standstill because the National Defense Advisory Committee failed last fall to allot the company sufficient aluminum to insure uninterrupted production. Changes of design, some necessary and some not, account for other delays. Since the decline in production figures reflects in part a shift from light to heavy models, it does not necessarily imply retrogression. It is evident, however, that 1,350 planes a month will not go very far toward saving Britain or guarding our own defenses when the Nazi production is nearly three times that figure.

*

WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PRETTY SURE THAT we knew what was behind the Christian Front; our suspicions were fully confirmed by the news of a meeting in Boston at which the Nazi film "Victory in the West" was shown to 600 people. Francis P. Moran, director of the Front in that city, admitted that his purpose was to spread the belief that the Nazis are invincible, and he urged mothers in the audience to write their sons in the army that the film had convinced them that the United States had little chance of beating the Germans. If this effort to undermine army morale is not subversive, that word has no meaning. Father Coughlin's *Social Justice* and the Brooklyn *Tablet* were sold at the meeting, and the film was preceded by a long speech in which Moran defended the Nazi conquest of Europe and attacked the British and President Roosevelt. "Under present laws," said the newspaper report, "the showing cannot be stopped because no admission fee was charged." We can't help feeling that if the Christian Front were "red" and "atheist" rather than reactionary and Catholic, a way would be found.

*

MISUSE OF FRANKING PRIVILEGES HAS BEEN a perennial scandal in Washington. But isolationists appear to have carried the abuse farther than any other group in recent years in their frantic opposition to the government's foreign policy. Certain of them, including Wheeler, Nye, Thorkelson, and Tinkham, are reported to have delivered large quantities of their franked, unaddressed envelopes to organizations like the Christian Front, the No Foreign War Committee, the American Coalition Society, the New York German-American list, and the America First Committee. Franked material under Wheeler's signature has been distributed by Joe McWilliams, leading American pro-Nazi. Since the Government Printing Office will not deliver franked envelopes without a requisition signed by the Senator or Representative whose name appears on the envelopes, the men named above cannot very well disclaim responsibility. The lending or leasing of a Congressional frank is a violation of the spirit if not the letter of the law, and isolationists should be held to account for their acts in the same manner as other persons.

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THERE IS NO NEED TO REPORT THE MANY resolutions passed by the fourth annual American Writers' Congress, since by a remarkable coincidence they were practically identical with those approved by numerous other Communist-controlled organizations which follow the "line" from "imperialist" war to "release Earl Browder." We feel, however, that the following letter written to the League of American Writers by the veteran British artist, author, and Socialist, J. F. Horrabin, ought to be placed on record. It was *not* read at the Congress.

> Dear Comrades: I am not entirely devoid of imagination and I did not, as a matter of fact, need to read "For Whom the Bell Tolls" in order to realize just what decent Spaniards must have felt about us British and French people when we covered up our cowardly "non-intervention" policy with high-sounding phrases. Now I don't even have to use my imagination any more to find out just how Spaniards felt—I know in my own person. Here in London, with the bombs dropping—the same make of bombs as smashed up Madrid—it is really thrilling to learn from your manifesto that in America there are writers and artists whose slogan is still "non-intervention," and whose main dread, apparently, is that their stories, poems, plays, essays, and books might be "abridged."
>
> Thank you, dear comrades, for a good belly-laugh in a grim world; and may the Lord have mercy on your prim, little, self-preserving, non-intervening souls.

*

THE "BUY SOMETHING BRITISH" MOVEMENT, which is carrying on a campaign in New York and elsewhere, should attract the support not only of advocates of all-out aid to Britain but of those isolationists who sincerely want Hitler beaten so long as it doesn't mean sticking out our own necks. For no one can assert that in buying British goods we are in any way exceeding our neutral rights. In Britain today manufacture for export is considered second only in importance to production of weapons and munitions. Every boatload of goods that can be sold abroad provides the means for the import of essential foodstuffs and war materials. Although the Lease-Lend Act relieved Britain of its most pressing financial anxieties in this country, it still needs to raise large sums in dollars from its own resources. It has almost exhausted its stocks of gold, and as rapidly as market conditions permit, it is realizing American securities and direct investments commandeered from British citizens. Only two weeks ago the shares of the American Viscose Company, the largest producer of artificial silk, wholly built up by British capital, were offered to the American public. Every dollar realized will stay in this country to pay for American goods exported to Britain, as will every dollar raised by the sale of British goods. Thus in "buying British" we are promoting reciprocal trade and helping ourselves.

Murray vs. Stalin

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S action in ordering the army to take over the North American Aviation Company's plant at Inglewood, California, is a step which will be viewed with equanimity by only three groups—extreme reactionaries, Nazis, and the Communist Party. The reactionaries want to see labor crushed; the motivation of the Communist Party, which is filling the air with charges of betrayal, is more complicated. It wishes to disrupt the defense program, and its strategy is to discredit the Administration and the present leadership of the C. I. O. To gain these ends it is quite ready to provoke anti-strike legislation and other repressive measures—which would provide it with ammunition against the Administration and the C. I. O. leadership and a new basis for recruiting strength among workers as politically naive as those in Inglewood obviously are.

In all three of the West Coast strikes, involving nearly 50,000 workers in aviation, shipbuilding, and lumber, the workers are seeking redress of legitimate grievances; and the great majority of the workers involved are undoubtedly innocent of anything resembling a subversive motive. But it has become very clear that the aviation and lumber strikes are under Communist direction, that the course followed has been motivated by the desire to foment trouble rather than to secure benefits for labor, and that the leaders of these strikes have not hesitated to misrepresent to the rank and file the position of the National Mediation Board and of the national leadership of the C. I. O.

The walkout of 11,000 men at the North American Aviation Company was called, despite a solemn promise to defer strike action, after the Mediation Board had had only two days in which to work out a formula for a very difficult and confused situation. A clear indication of irresponsibility or worse in the woodworkers' strike of the Puget Sound area lies in the fact that a dispute in the Columbia Basin region involving the very same grievances was adjusted by the Mediation Board without a walkout. The settlement worked out by the board for both areas included a wage increase which brings the minimum to 75 cents an hour, vacations with pay, and a "union-maintenance" shop. All present employees must be union members as a condition of employment, while new employees will be "encouraged" to join. This is an excellent settlement. It was found acceptable by the Columbia Basin group and recommended by Philip Murray, but it was branded a scheme to "bulldoze the workers" by O. M. Orton of the International Woodworkers.

The machinists' (A. F. of L.) and steel workers' (C. I. O.) locals conducting the shipyard strike are said to be under the influence of the Maritime Federation, which is controlled by Harry Bridges. In this case a con-

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test for power between the Bridges organization and the national leadership of the machinists' union seems to be one major element in the difficulty. Another is the refusal of a Bethlehem Steel subsidiary to sign the agreement accepted by its competitors.

The strikes have created a delicate and dangerous situation. The movement toward drastic anti-labor legislation has already begun. But such legislation would only play into the hands of those elements which are prepared to capitalize on the resulting discontent. The principal hope lies in the ability of labor's top leadership to put its own house in order. Philip Murray's letter addressed to the woodworkers' locals over the head of Orton and recommending prompt acceptance of the National Mediation Board's terms, the stout condemnation of all three strikes by the Labor Advisory Council of the OPM, and the suspension by Richard Frankensteen, head of the United Automobile Workers, of the leaders responsible for the walkout at Inglewood, are the first steps in that direction.

The task of heading off anti-labor laws and other repressive measures rests largely with Murray. John L. Lewis could help. He could retrieve much of his lost prestige by repudiating the use of his name by the Communist factions in the various unions involved and by throwing his support to Murray, whose devotion to labor's interests is beyond suspicion. We understand that Lewis is being strongly urged to do just that, and Washington observers say that there is a better than even chance that he will do so. Meanwhile the three strikes have at least served to bring into the open the real objectives of the Communists, whose efficiency as organizers is more than offset by their efficiency as wreckers.

Charles Evans Hughes

THE NATION, which opposed the confirmation of Charles Evans Hughes as Chief Justice of the United States, extends its best wishes to him on his retirement. The balance sheet of his accomplishments, struck at the close of an extraordinarily long and variegated career, does him honor. It is a pleasure to admit that though he did not fully grasp the needs of a changing time, as Chief Justice he amply refuted our fear that he would bring to the office the outlook of the typical corporation lawyer. The period of his life spent in private practice can now be seen as the comparatively short interlude it was, and there is much in his record which deserves gratefully to be remembered. Less spectacular, if more fruitful, than his brilliant work as a young man in the New York gas-monopoly and Armstrong insurance investigations was his successful fight as Governor of New York to save the resources of the St. Lawrence from the aluminum and power trusts. If his opposition to the recognition of Russia marks a blind spot in his service as Secretary of State, his work at the Washington conference of 1921 helps to weight the other side of the scales.

As a jurist, Charles Evans Hughes will be best remembered as a friend of civil liberties and the rights of minorities, particularly that minority which has most needed protection, the Negro. His decisions during his first term on the bench, though they do not rank with those of the Olympian Holmes, showed more knowledge of the business world and sometimes greater insight than those of the philosopher from Massachusetts. There are a number of cases involving problems of business regulation and at least one in the field of Southern circumvention of peonage laws in which Hughes stirs admiration where Holmes evokes indulgence. This is achievement enough for any judge.

Ambition drives men to the sources of power, but posterity is perverse and recalls their relations with the lowly. Hughes stood with Holmes in the forgotten dissent against the legal lynching in the Frank case in Georgia. He helped free Herndon and the Scottsboro boys. It was not until he became Chief Justice that majority opinion on the court accorded civil liberties the same protection under the Fourteenth Amendment it had so long accorded property rights. This is a proud record for the man *The Nation,* along with its brilliant Washington correspondent, Paul Y. Anderson, and Senators Borah and Norris, tagged a Wall Street lawyer in 1930.

It may be some years before the full facts are known as to the part played by Hughes in the Supreme Court fight, and attempts to judge it can be but tentative. There would have been no court fight if Hughes and Roberts had held to the conception of the economic emergency laid down in the Appalachian coal case and to the broad interpretation of government power to deal with that emergency in the Nebbia milk case. Their failure to apply the same wise standards to the legislation of the New Deal period made it necessary for the President to fight or surrender. He chose to fight. Whether the method he picked was the right one or not need not concern us at this moment, because it failed. Hughes's letter to Senator Wheeler on the work of the court and the condition of his docket refuted the President's claim that the court needed to be enlarged because it was overworked. What it needed was a change in personnel because its majority was behind the times.

The Chief Justice earned esteem by realizing that it was not sufficient merely to block the court plan. The principal reforms of the New Deal were approved before vacancies permitted the President to name a majority. The constitutional revolution of 1937 reversed doctrines which had grown up since the nineties and brought a return to older and broader interpretations. Hughes had the acumen to recognize the inevitable, and that is the larger part of statesmanship.

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Wars and Rumors of Peace

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

THE two weeks since the President's speech proclaiming an unlimited emergency have been queer weeks. Things have happened which encouraged hope of strong consistent action. Other things have failed to happen which should have—giving rise to a new wave of doubts and to new rumors of peace. The peace talk has been a symptom of something even more sinister than Nazi propaganda at work, though it obviously was encouraged from Nazi sources, as the President bluntly charged. But its wild-fire spread was the result of an underlying pessimism which was evident before Mr. Roosevelt spoke and has persisted since, a pessimism based on growing doubt of the capacity of the British command—in Whitehall and on the fronts—to cope with the magnificently organized ruthlessness of the Germans. This doubt is not the creation of Nazi propaganda; it is the natural child of defeats and setbacks. The loss of Crete was more than a loss in itself, and more than a direct threat to the eastern Mediterranean bases of the British fleet. It was widely accepted as a new proof of Hitler's superior planning, of the shrewd daring with which his aggressions are carried through, of the degree to which the British were being out-maneuvered, outwitted, outnumbered, and surprised on their own grounds. The reaction was vigorous. In England it expressed itself in open and healthy criticism, and a full debate in Commons on the situation in the Middle East is promised. But the Nazi successes were also responsible for the wild rumors of a peace of capitulation that have played so handsomely into the plans of the enemies of democracy on both sides of the Atlantic.

Doubt cannot be stilled by pronouncements; and some of the official statements of recent days have only served to feed it. The war-aims talk of Anthony Eden was probably designed to buttress the fine effect of the President's speech by contributing content and aim to his analysis of the struggle. Its actual effect was quite the contrary. In the context of today's events the speech simply didn't make sense. Without quite knowing why, the hearer inevitably found himself harboring misgivings about a government whose Foreign Secretary offered nothing but lofty generalities to a civilization in mortal throes. It was the smooth, high-minded, unrealistic sort of talk that characterized the statements of British officials throughout the years of fencing and evasion that led to war. It provided no peace aims that a hungry Europe—or an anxious America—could get its teeth into. And so it did more harm than good.

The overwhelming vote against a negotiated peace registered at the British Labor Party convention in London was the most heartening event of the two weeks. It showed that no worm of defeatism has crept into the heart of Britain's workers and that they still consider the war against international fascism their own struggle. But the peace-aims resolution was disappointing. The Labor Party should have seized the opportunity to establish a clear and solid position in contradistinction to the vaporous suggestions of Mr. Eden. Instead, it wrapped up a collection of generous hopes in socialist language and let the matter go at that. In a time of desperate crisis it is difficult to formulate the terms on which peace can be restored and then organized; but this task is none the less pressing, if only to put a moral weapon into the hands of the anti-fascist forces of the world. Today all the concrete plans and promises are on the side of tyranny, and they comprise one of its most powerful instruments of penetration.

As a tonic for public confidence Ambassador Winant's visit to this country was hardly more effective. He reported to the President and to various department heads, but he made no public statement. This was unfortunate. Whatever specific private information he may have had for the government, there was much he could have told the people as a whole. He should have been authorized to speak openly about the general situation. Instead, his opinions trickled out in the form of rather pessimistic and qualified fragments often quoted at second hand, and the air of official secrecy which closed around his visit encouraged rather than helped to check defeatist rumors.

But even the best statements sound hollow unless they are backed by the only argument that can make them effective—vigorous and determined action. The movement of British and Free French forces into Syria has been almost as stimulating as a victory. Following the British success in checkmating Nazi moves in Iraq, the drive in Syria proves that it is not too late even now to seize the initiative from Hitler. That the effort was unduly delayed is not to be denied; Mr. Stevens's article on page 688 exposes Britain's all-but-fatal procrastination in this crucial region. But the energetic offensive now in progress has changed the situation in the eastern Mediterranean—and in men's minds as well.

In the end American confidence can be restored only by proofs of vigor in Washington. What is needed is the quality official Washington most desperately lacks —a keen, imaginative, fighting spirit. The country feels that lack; and it realizes that the President cannot inject it into the veins of bureaucrats merely by talking about it. Men must be found who can cut through obstacles to get things done quickly, and who are willing to face the realities behind smooth appearances. No wonder the people feel uneasy. How long are solemn warnings to take the place of firm action? How long are Nazi agents

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to remain in America disguised as diplomats? How long are we going to send our enemies supplies of war materials to be used against our friends—and ultimately against ourselves? When do we intend to change the neutrality law to permit the use of American ships for carrying goods to Britain? When are we going to begin really to protect the goods we send?

Doubt is no crime. It is a sensible reaction to slackness and stupidity. It can be wiped out only by evidence of realism and courage in high places.

Snub-and-Sell Diplomacy

BY I. F. STONE

Washington, June 8

VICHY need not think it can collaborate with Hitler unscathed. I hope I am revealing no military secrets when I predict that after the Nazis have occupied Dakar, Mr. Hull will take note in the strongest terms of the grave allegations arising and, should a new situation on full inquiry be disclosed, resume freedom to act accordingly. "Accept, sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration. . . ." Beneath the imperturbable mask of protocol beat the hearts of tigers, and I consider it a duty to report a growing suspicion here that American diplomacy has already delivered a crushing blow to Vichy. On Friday M. Henry-Haye, the French Ambassador, asked Mr. Hull for an interview. M. Henry-Haye was kept waiting. M. Henry-Haye, after a wait, was informed that unfortunately the Secretary of State was very busy. The suspicion spread that M. Henry-Haye, as evidence of this government's displeasure, had been snubbed. The clever part of this, if I remember my Grotius, is that a snub, even the snub intentional, is not a casus belli. The sly old foxes of the State Department had again taken measures short of war.

The clumsy amateurs in Congress do not understand that a war of blitzsnub as waged by the State Department requires the utmost secrecy, lest the element of surprise be eliminated. The complex questions of national policy which lead our State Department to seize the western end of M. Henry-Haye before the breathless Nazis have had time to consolidate their hold on the eastern end of the Mediterranean cannot be debated on the Hill.

Mr. Hull sent an emissary to the House Rules Committee on Wednesday to block passage of the Gillette-Coffee resolution to investigate the leak—a mild word for it—of American supplies to the Axis. The State Department seems to be cleverer at office politics than at international, and I am sorry to report that its spokesman on this occasion was Dean Acheson, whom the President put into the department recently to leaven the sodden mass of Breckinridge Longs. Though Mr. Acheson is no appeaser and is not in favor of providing the Axis with oil or other war supplies, he turned up neatly garroted in the old school tie. The department's point of view, as he presents it, seems somewhat lacking in clarity. It appears to be that disclosure of the facts would be unwise; that the facts are already disclosed in Department of Commerce reports on imports and exports; that exports to countries friendly to the Axis are being carefully watched; that of course, although they are being carefully watched, there is no way of being sure supplies are not being forwarded to the Axis; that one must be careful in shutting off supplies to countries friendly to the Axis because that would make them friendly to the Axis. If this still leaves you a trifle confused, remember that in diplomacy there are no blacks and whites—just fog.

In civil life a progressive and intelligent specimen of the corporation lawyer, Mr. Acheson seems something of a radical in the State Department. Unfortunately in this case he has let the old crowd in the department maneuver him into a position where he will take the rap for them. In a search for motives proponents of the resolution point to the fact that last year Mr. Acheson appeared before the Supreme Court as counsel for the Ethyl Corporation. Ethyl is jointly owned by the du Ponts and Standard Oil of New Jersey. Neither can afford to have this resolution approved. Nor can those in the State Department who act as their international errand boys. I am prepared to vouch for Mr. Acheson's innocence and high state of subjective purity, but I still think it was improper for him to appear before the Rules Committee in opposition to a measure that would hurt important clients he had served in private life. The result will be to make him the lightning rod for less honorable elements in the department. I wish they handled our national affairs as skilfully as their own.

The Rules Committee held an executive session, but some of the facts presented there leaked to the press, as they should have. The figures on shipments to Japan are an old story; Brigadier General Russell L. Maxwell, administrator of export control, testified recently that we sent Japan 157,534,350 gallons of petroleum from July 1, 1940, to March 15, 1941, although oil was "embargoed" on July 31, 1940. The Rules Committee learned that Japan is not the only possible channel through which supplies are going to the Axis and that oil

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is not the only war material being sent them. Toluene is one of the constituents of TNT. We sent no toluene to Spain in 1939. We shipped 1,574,000 pounds to that country in 1940. Tinplate and taggers' tin have many military uses. Shipments to Spain rose from 6,105,000 pounds in 1939 to 20,436,000 pounds in 1940. Shipments to Portugal rose from 1,911,000 pounds in 1938 to 34,976,000 pounds in 1940. The State Department thinks this is for tinning sardines. I think we ought to make sure it isn't for tinning tools and plane parts for the Germans.

Cotton linters and pulp can be used for stuffing mattresses. They can also be used for explosives. Spanish imports of American cotton linters and pulp last year amounted to 2,337,000 pounds; there were none the year before. Spanish imports of lubricating greases rose from 577,000 pounds in 1938 to 3,931,000 pounds in 1940. Both the State Department and the British Ministry of Economic Warfare have explained that Spanish imports of petroleum have been sharply restricted to Spanish domestic needs. But Spain's imports of petroleum from this country rose from 2,571,000 forty-two-gallon barrels in 1938 to 4,456,000 barrels in 1940. The committee's attention was also called to the sensational rise in the shipments of American lard to Finland. We sent Finland 122,000 pounds in 1938, 732,000 pounds in 1939, 17,602,000 pounds in 1940. Finland today is in the German economic orbit.

For all its eulogies of democracy the State Department has always had an aristocratic professional dislike of democratic processes. This inquiry is feared (1) because it might interfere with the possibility of appeasing the Japanese, (2) because it would reveal the powerful influence of oil and other interests in the department, and (3) because it would thereby hurt the department's behind-the-scenes fight to control the long-postponed establishment of a Ministry of Economic Warfare. The only safe place for that ministry is in the Treasury. The State Department would sabotage economic warfare as it has the "oil embargo."

Can Vichy Hold Syria?

BY PETER STEVENS

AT THE eleventh hour the British have marched into Syria in an effort to obtain control of a region which, from the dawn of history, has been the strategic key to the Middle East. As long ago as early April, when I was in Beirut, I could see that a showdown between Britain and the Vichy government was approaching. The Luftwaffe had not yet moved in, but the country was swarming with Nazi agents, and the administration headed by General Dentz was wholly subservient to the Axis. Since then the Germans have occupied the airports and brought in ground crews and perhaps some soldiers. But the main defense of Syria still depends on the French, and the success of the comparatively small forces which General Wavell can spare for this operation may well turn on the extent to which Vichy can count on the loyalty of a handful of French civil servants and officers.

The Germans are certain to do everything possible to maintain a grip on Syria, which with its good north and south communications offers a route to Suez far easier than the western desert. But they have not yet solved the problem of transporting large numbers of men and their equipment to the battleground. Unless they go through Turkey, how can they get to Syria? The British island of Cyprus lies between the German army in Crete and the Syrian coast. The strength of Cyprus is the subject of many conflicting rumors. Some say Chamberlain made a secret agreement with Mussolini in 1936 and 1937 not to modernize the fortifications of Cyprus. Some say it has been strengthened with new guns and planes since last autumn. To try to pass Cyprus and capture Syria from the air, or with sea-borne forces protected from the British ships based on Cyprus by an air escort, would be highly dangerous. It will not be surprising, therefore, if the Germans attempt to counter the British move into Syria by an attack on Cyprus after the Crete pattern. But the capture of this island could not be fully exploited if meanwhile General Wilson had secured full control in Syria. The vigor and extent of French resistance becomes, therefore, of vital importance.

A handful of French officials backed by a small military garrison sit on the safety-valve in Syria holding down a large French-hating Arab population. Vichy has in Syria not over 50,000 troops, 40,000 of them Senegalese blacks from Africa. There is one battalion of the Foreign Legion. This is a totally inadequate force to halt a determined invasion from any quarter. In the harbors, mainly in Beirut and Latakia, are three or four destroyers, one or two submarines, and a few small patrol boats.

Beirut, seat of the French government for both Syria and Lebanon, is a hotbed of petty intrigue and dissension. The headquarters of the Vichy-Italian-German group is the grotesquely ugly new Hotel Normandie, a colonial Frenchman's dream of a modernistic palace. The

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few Britishers, the pro-British French, and the Americans gather at the Hotel St. George on the waterfront. Between them the war is conducted in miniature, with plots and threats. The night that Keren fell to the British and Free French forces a daring group of Americans invaded the Normandie and drank loud toasts to the Italian defeats until the police discreetly suggested it would be well for them to stay in their own hotel.

The French military is split into two antagonistic camps. One is anti-German and pro-British, almost de Gaullist and anti-Vichy. The other is anti-British and pro-Pétain, with even a few pro-Germans. Roughly it may be said that majors, colonels, and higher-ranking officers form the second group, while the junior officers are pro-British almost to a man. Most of the men in the Foreign Legion are anti-Nazis and many are refugees from Germany. Everyone, of course, is anti-Italian.

A captain said to me, "We shall get orders from Vichy to oppose the British when they come in. My old colonel would execute them in good faith, but what if I and my lieutenants ordered our Senegalese to throw down their arms and surrender? They would gladly obey. These blacks know that Hitler called them half-apes. No, I think our army might dissolve before a British invasion and leave Fougère and his colonels to hold the fort for Laval and Hitler and Darlan."

Vichy can depend, however, on its naval forces, for the navy is bitter over Oran and Dakar and eager for revenge. At least one of the destroyers at Beirut in April was a veteran of both battles, and its officers were thoroughly pro-German.

An old French colonel, a shining exception to my rule-of-thumb categories, a veteran of both Verdun and the Maginot break-through, said rather bitterly, "Why don't the damned British come? They are always late. If they lose this war, it's nothing but too much cricket. Why, man, a brass band and four Tommies could have taken Syria last summer, unless they had been smothered to death under the flowers we'd have thrown at 'em." He bolted his drink and added, "Tell 'em down in Jerusalem that it's growing harder every day."

It is growing harder every day because the Germans and Italians have been far from idle. The Armistice Commission is busy everywhere, promising everything to each Arab group, fomenting trouble, and spending money like water. Baron von Rosen, German adviser to the Italian Armistice Commission, is frequently in the news. Behind him, and far more ruthless and more sinister, is Baron von Hentig. Both are working like beavers at Beirut and out among the Arabs. Hentig, an archaeologist, is an Arab expert and an intriguer of long experience. As a young man he went to Afghanistan in the last war and caused Britain no end of trouble on the Northwest Frontier.

General Dentz, the French High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon, said to an American friend of mine, "As long as these Boches, Hentig and Rosen, are here I am really not High Commissioner at all. They appear humble and helpful and courteous, but every suggestion of theirs that I turn down comes through a few days later as orders from Darlan. Hentig tells Ribbentrop, Ribbentrop tells Abetz, and Abetz gives the order to Darlan, who gives it to me. I can save time by obeying my bosses here."

As relations between the Germans and the Vichy government become closer and closer, there must come a day of reckoning for the Germans who have subsidized anti-French Arabs. It will be difficult for Otto Abetz to promise Darlan the integrity of the French Empire while reports of Hentig's and Rosen's backing of the Nationalists in Syria continue to come in from General Dentz. And sooner or later even Arab Nationalists will come to realize that not each and every group of them can be the leader of a vast independent Arab empire while at the same time France maintains its empire on a German guaranty. Almost anybody can figure out after a while that two governments, like two objects, cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Either Abetz in Paris or Rosen and Hentig in Syria will have to begin to pull in their horns before long.

The chief Nationalist organization, the Shukri Koualty Party, is openly in the pay of the Germans. On March 24 it issued an interesting manifesto which said in essence: "Frenchmen, get out of our country. We never asked you to come here. You are defeated and discredited. You made this war, not we, and yet we are hungry as a result. Get out and allow us to eat our own food." Fundamentally this is true. Syria lives largely on imported rice and exported wheat. With the fall of France rice imports stopped, and the French fixed such a low price for wheat that most of it was smuggled out of the country and traded for Turkish money, which the Arabs are hoarding. On the long, almost uninhabited Turkish border the French are helpless to stop the smuggling. As a result many Arabs are hungry—and angry.

All during March and April street fighting was going on between French and Arabs in Aleppo, Homs, and Damascus. Six or eight dead were reported every day, and there were rumors of many more. Tanks finally had to be sent out to quell the Nationalists.

Wheat and rice are not the only shortages. All sorts of small manufactured articles are missing or terribly expensive. Gasoline and coal are rationed in such small quantities that few automobiles can be run at all, and the hotels furnish no hot water except in jugs once a day for shaving. A taxi is allowed less than ten gallons of gasoline a month. I was able to motor about Syria by obtaining gasoline from Palestine on a special British export permit.

Formerly the pipe line from the Kirkuk oil fields split

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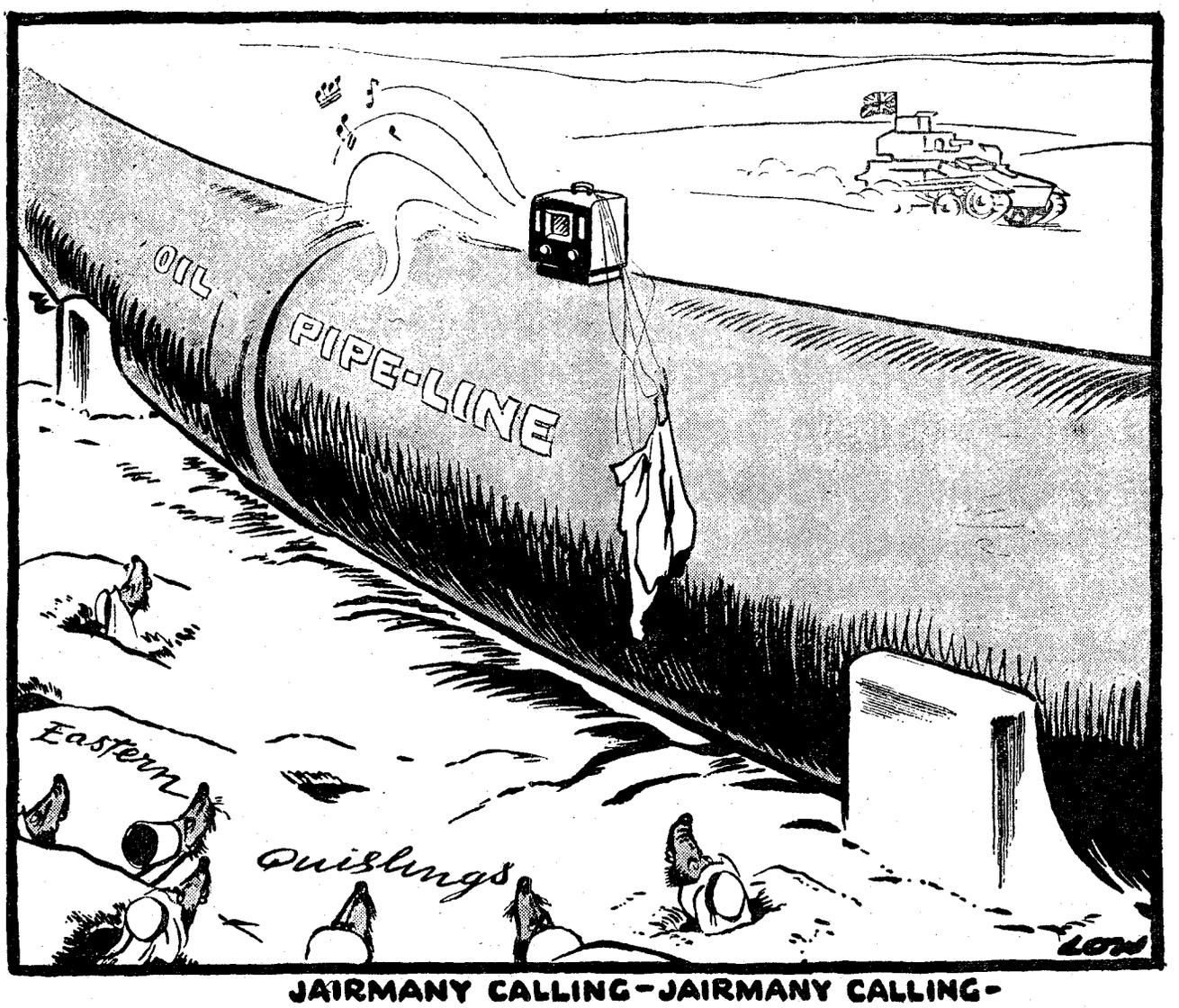
at Haditha, and half went to Syria and half to the British refineries at Haifa. The French built no refineries in Syria but took the crude by tanker to France to be refined. After the armistice the British were able to cut off the Syrian supply by the simple process of turning a valve in Iraq. The French then built a small one-still refinery in Tripoli and refined the little oil they had on hand. When that is gone, there will be no more.

In the south of Lebanon a small pro-English Arab party persists. It took a lot of French misgovernment and stupidity to drive these Arabs to the point of becoming pro-British. They call themselves Chah Bander after their leader, who was assassinated last year by a Koualty man from the north. They are probably subsidized by the British; at any rate they are directed by a small independent Arab Office established in Jerusalem by the British army and headed by a very clever young man named Ogden, who was formerly consul in Damascus.

The French in Syria have been so corrupt and so selfish that it is difficult to feel very sorry for them in their plight. Scandal after scandal has occurred. Typical of these is the salt monopoly given to a Stavisky type of politician named Tallec, who destroyed all the Arabs' equipment for making their own salt from sea water and drove the price of salt to astronomical heights. Upon investigation it was discovered that not a penny had come into the treasuries of the two mandated republics and that all the profits had been split between Tallec and a group of ministers and political bosses in Paris.

In the struggle that has now begun Germany holds many of the best cards. General Fougère, commanding all troops in Syria, is a lifelong Anglophobe; Rosen and Hentig have worked long and well. But the British are on the spot, while the huge resources in men and material which Germany commands in the eastern Mediterranean are still some hundreds of miles away. The British have other assets in the proximity of their Palestine bases and their command of plentiful oil supplies, but the decisive factor may prove to be the attitude of the young French officers.

Anything can now happen—a great German victory and a break-through to the Persian Gulf, to Abadan and oil, to Suez, and even to India; or a new Marne, from which Germany, drunk with success, might not recover.



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The Liberals' War

BY STANLEY HIGH

POLITICS has never more notably justified its reputation as the maker of strange bedfellows than in the current fight against all-out aid to Britain. The brunt of that battle is being borne by an inorganic but none the less effective alliance between radicals and reactionaries, liberals and conservatives—a left-right coalition. It is the first joint job of its kind in our history.

Thus, shoulder to shoulder, stand the Chicago *Tribune* and the *Daily Worker,* the United States Chamber of Commerce and the American Youth Congress, the National Economy League and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Mrs. Albert Dilling and Robert M. Hutchins, Father Coughlin and the La Follettes. When Norman Thomas came to Washington to testify before a Senate committee, he was taken in tow by Alice Roosevelt Longworth. On the original list of sponsors of the America First Committee the name of Henry Ford appeared only two places removed from that of Kathryn Lewis, the daughter of John L. Lewis.

What these normally antithetical persons agree on, in effect, is this: that of all the possible evils that could befall us war is the worst. They mean, of course, this particular war. Whatever happens to Britain and however powerful and filled with blood-lust Hitler is due to be after it happens, they are for peace now. They are for peace, not primarily in order that we may have time to prepare, but because they are frightened. They are afraid of a war, not because they think we would lose it, but because of what fighting it, win or lose, would do to us.

The prospects which they see ahead of us are in line with the conflicting ideological settings from which they spring. To those of leftist-liberal persuasion, democracy would not stand the strain of war; to their reactionary colleagues, it would stand the strain too well. To the former, it would wipe out the social gains of recent years; to the others, it would too indiscriminately extend them. Prepare, says Norman Thomas, for a capitalist-imperialist dictator; look out, says Colonel McCormick, for Ernest Bevin. It is plain that the two groups who reach these contradictory conclusions cannot both be right. One or the other of them should know better. As between the two views, it seems to me that the reactionary makes far more sense. In fact, the reactionaries appear to be better caught up with their history and to have read the signs of the times with more intelligence than the leftist-liberals who are lined up with them.

That pacifism should have such powerful conservative support is in itself an indication of how times have changed. The assumption that big business was largely responsible for the last war and that, given half an international crisis, it would go hell-bent for another has been for twenty years one of American liberalism's most prized clichés. It is still prized, despite the Cliveden set, Manufacturer Neville Chamberlain's Munich, Henry Ford, General Hugh Johnson, General Robert E. Wood, and a host of other militant conservatives who in this particular crisis are unmistakably pacifist. This pacifism of theirs is firmly rooted in self-interest. Its growth, however, is not a result of the knowledge that the profits in the next war are sure to be more drastically curtailed than they were in the last one. It is not immediately related to profits at all or to fear of the consequences of overexpansion. The fear on which it is nourished is a matter of tendencies, or trends. And these trends are not hypothetical. Business, particularly big business, has been actually experiencing them ever since March 4, 1933.

Since that date government, which was once the convenience if not the servant of big business, has increasingly become its master. This has not come to pass as a result of one of those periodic and therefore generally superficial shifts in government emphasis from which, in due time, a shift back can be expected. It has been accomplished by the deliberate elevation to a place of decisive political power of that vast company of our citizens who in a more class-conscious country would be called the proletariat. Thus, what we have gone through, as the reactionaries size it up, is something that approximates a revolution. They do not believe that we are all the way through it. They cling to the hope that it can be stopped at about where it is now and eventually, perhaps, even pushed back a little. That is why they are for peace at almost any price. They know that in a war "big government" inevitably gets bigger. They particularly do not want this big government to get bigger, for the bigger it gets the more potent will grow the forces behind it and the more unlikely will be any reversal of the trend of the times.

Norman Thomas, Robert M. Hutchins, the La Follettes, and a great many other liberals of various stripe make, by implication, an exactly contrary appraisal of what has happened and the power behind it. They are not convinced that the legislation of recent years has come to stay, that the trend behind it is permanent, or that the people behind the trend can be counted on. A war, they say, is all that is needed to turn back the clock and send these newly articulate voters scurrying back to

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where they came from. "If we go to war," said Mr. Hutchins in a radio address, "we cast away our opportunity and cancel our gains. For a generation, perhaps for a hundred years, we shall not be able to struggle back to where we were. In fact, the changes that total war will bring may mean that we shall never be able to struggle back. Education will cease. The effort to establish a democratic community will stop. We shall think no more of justice, the moral order, and the supremacy of human rights. We shall have hope no longer."

The facts do not support Mr. Hutchins. The facts support the reactionaries. It is a notable phenomenon of recent crises that their chief beneficiaries have not been the "Mr. Bigs" but the "little fellows." From all outward appearances the United States was never freer from crises than during the regimes of Harding and Coolidge and into the first year of Hoover. The high spots of that period, in terms of Mr. Hutchins's humanitarian values, were Teapot Dome, the jazz age, prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan, Al Capone, Daddy Browning, and the bull market. Things of liberal moment began to happen when that world blew up—with the market crash. Since 1930 the United States has had more crises than in any other decade since the sixties—and has got more done of social significance. This is not to say that a holocaust is an essential prerequisite to progress. It is to say, rather, that the "little fellow" is better placed today than he ever was before to turn the aftermath of a holocaust to his own account.

In the United States the trend toward that situation got under way as far back as Bryan and the first Roosevelt's revolt against McKinleyism. Slowly but steadily ever since, the more or less underprivileged classes of our citizens have grown aware of the economic possibilities of political power and more familiar with the instruments and technique of politics. The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 was their first major achievement. He was elected not by a Democratic but by a class landslide. Most of what has been accomplished since has been designed to meet the needs and consolidate the power of the members of that class, who have won two more Presidential elections. Anyone who thinks that a war now would frighten that bloc away from its objectives has failed to note how long it has been on the way or how far it has come in the last eight years.

Moreover, the facts about the present war crisis just as plainly confirm the fears of the isolationist reactionaries, who are distressed at the prospect of too much democracy, and controvert the isolationist liberals, who are distressed at the prospect of too little. Far more than most, this is to date a little people's war. In every country they have suffered first and most. Particularly in England they have lost their lives and their small possessions. And all the signs and portents indicate that their sufferings, far from shaking their morale, have only increased it. This, I think, is not chiefly because of their innate heroism. It is because long before devastation began to drop from the clouds these people were already acutely aware of what the war was all about. They are now taking it on the chin as the lesser of two evil alternatives. As between bombing and the tyranny of the evil agency behind the bombs, they have chosen to be bombed.

In the many pre-war efforts to placate Hitler, not one of any significance could have been called a little people's movement. On the contrary, appeasement was a policy pursued most energetically by those at the opposite end of the social and economic scale. One of the first great appeasers was Fritz Thyssen, assisted by other German big shots. He was joined—to their country's ruin—by the steel families of France. Appeasement in England was supported by Neville Chamberlain, the big business man, and behind him was the influence of those who are sometimes described as the Cliveden set. British labor—except, at a late date, the Communist minority—was all the time implacably anti-totalitarian. Stiffening the back of the British government, which involved the ousting of Chamberlain and the elevation of Winston Churchill, was almost wholly the work of middle-class and working-class opinion. And it is the continued and unchanged force of that opinion which has prevented the rise in England of any movement toward a negotiated peace.

It is a further mark of the ascendancy of this opinion that British democracy, in the midst of the war, continues to flourish. And there is every indication that, if Britain wins, the British working classes—as Britain's reactionaries shrewdly foresaw—will be the chief gainers. Their gains will begin with the modern housing projects with which London's bombed-out East End will be rebuilt. They will probably include a democratic revamping of the British school system and a similar overhauling of the country's vast landed estates. There will be no lack of other measures. Meanwhile, next to Churchill, who, though an imperialist, is no coddler of the aristocracy, the British man of the hour is Ernest Bevin, a labor leader. That Mr. Roosevelt senses what is in the wind is indicated by his dispatch to Britain of Messrs. Winant and Cohen, who are as unversed in diplomacy and military matters as they are schooled in social reform.

It is possible, of course, that when peace comes events will get out of hand as they did under Kerensky in Russia. In that case the worst that the far right looks for from the war will probably materialize. But if, on the other hand, the Roosevelt-Bevin point of view prevails, what we shall get will probably be only more of what, since 1933, we have been getting. That, as things stand today, is not a pleasant prospect for the reactionaries. But by the war's end it may be so much more pleasing than its alternative that it will be hailed with relief.

Meanwhile it would profit those liberals who are pacifist because of their liberalism to take a look around. A good

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many things may go to pot before the war and after it. But, given Hitler's defeat, there is very little present prospect that the objectives they pursue will be among them. Anyone who believes that in the event of a democratic victory democracy will be the loser has completely lost sight of the power which the democratic masses have accumulated, of their increased skill in the use of that power, and of the degree to which, using it, they forced the present showdown between democracy and totalitarianism.

Muscle Shoals Land Racket

BY ALDEN STEVENS

"HAVE you got $750? Do you want to turn it into $4,400 in three years—or less? Look at the profit you can make by buying land at Muscle Shoals." Sales talk of this kind is being heard again; people are again being offered the chance to become millionaires by the simple method of speculating in land. The people who will work in defense-industry plants must have houses to live in near the factories that are going up. These houses have to be built on land. So buy yourself a piece of land and hold it for a couple of years, and it will make you rich.

Land speculation is going on wherever there is a defense boom. Soaring rents mean higher land values, and rents have doubled and tripled in Norfolk, San Diego, Starke, Florida, and many other towns. The farms around one new powder plant have been turned into residential subdivisions; near another a real-estate man has bought an old cemetery and sold off twenty-foot building lots. There are many places besides Muscle Shoals where money can be made in that way, but Muscle Shoals offers Exceptional Opportunities.

It seemed to offer Exceptional Opportunities once before, toward the close of the last war, but the war was over before the government got around to producing nitrates with the power generated at Wilson Dam, and the opportunities didn't materialize. Three small cities are clustered near Wilson Dam: Florence, which T. S. Stribling writes about; Tuscumbia, where Helen Keller was born; and Sheffield, where most of the trains stop. These places are almost contiguous and are called by their inhabitants the "Tri-cities." They are all typical Alabama towns. But hooked on to one side of Sheffield is Muscle Shoals, and that is not at all typical.

Wide avenues run straight in Muscle Shoals and are crossed by wide streets with sidewalks and fireplugs and fine lamp posts. Handsome street signs proclaim the names of the broad avenues—Wilson Boulevard, Washington Avenue, Michigan Boulevard, Broadway. There is a City Hall, compact and neat. There are a couple of real-estate offices, a few scattered houses, and some miscellaneous other buildings. The rest of Muscle Shoals is the ghost of a realtor's dream. Grass really does grow in the streets here, and in the middle of the blocks too.

Now Muscle Shoals contemplates another boom. At the City Hall they are working nights recording taxes paid up by property owners who had let them slide for ten, fifteen, or twenty years. This boom isn't going to fizzle out, they think. One local real-estate man, between hurried dashes to New York, nodded his head prophetically and said, "It's sure going to hit us this time." Real-estate men are pushing lots as if they were some new kind of kitchen gadget. Do you want to hear more about these "opportunities"? Fill out the addressed postpaid card that came to you and drop it in the mailbox at the corner. Mr. Bixby, of the Bixby Associates, to choose a name at random, will be ringing the bell almost before you get back to the house. He will be a well-groomed, pleasant gentleman who talks frankly and convincingly.

The Tennessee Valley has been called the "Ruhr of America," he says; potentially it is the heart of the industrial United States. Three enormous dams—Wheeler, Wilson, and Pickwick—will develop 1,260,000 horsepower. Even today they have a capacity of 440,000 horse-power. All these dams, Mr. Bixby points out, are in "the Muscle Shoals area." Wilson Dam alone, he says, produces 81,000 horse-power today and will develop 130,000 when the powerhouse is fully equipped. (TVA figures, oddly enough, show more than this: 245,000 capacity today; 592,000 ultimately. Mr. Bixby has the natural conservatism of the real-estate salesman.) He then quotes a statement by Henry Ford, printed in the Dearborn *Independent*. Mr. Ford said that in his experience the ratio of industrial employment to available horsepower was one to one; that is, for every unit of horsepower developed, one worker is employed. So when Wilson Dam produces 130,000 horse-power, 130,000 men ought to be working there. Again the conservative streak in Mr. Bixby comes out. He doesn't want you to think he is exaggerating so he is going to divide this figure by five. The result gives a minimum of 26,000 men to be employed in the "Muscle Shoals area."

Where will they work? Mr. Bixby knows. The Electro-Metallurgical Company is going to triple the size of its plant, putting in $15,000,000. Reynolds Metal is going

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to build a $40,000,000 aluminum plant. The TVA is expanding its nitrate plant and also building a million-dollar office building. Mr. Bixby has newspaper clippings to prove it. Also, he whispers, du Pont is going to make synthetic rubber at Muscle Shoals if it gets the government contract it is after. At least $63,000,000 is going to be poured into the Muscle Shoals area in the next three years, plus whatever the government spends, plus the du Pont plant if this materializes, and Mr. Bixby does not doubt that it will materialize. "You know the rubber situation today, don't you?"

Every worker, Mr. Bixby says, supports four other persons (the national average is generally held to be two and one-half unemployed for each employed person). This means that the population of the area will be about 130,000 people. The average price of residential property, he says, in a community of 130,000 is $110 per front foot, and he has a chart to prove it. Mr. Bixby's choice lots for home building in the Muscle Shoals area are 40 by 128; so they should be worth $4,400 when the plant expansion is complete, that is, in two or three years. Mr. Bixby's price to you is only $750; $4,400 less $750 is $3,650—your profit.

Mr. Bixby frankly admits that this spectacular rise in land value is contingent upon the expansion he has outlined. Also, admittedly, the price per front foot varies even among communities of similar size. Let's see what the *lowest* price per front foot is, in a community of 130,000. Seems to be, he says, according to the chart, about $50. That makes a forty-foot lot worth $2,000; your profit, then, would be $1,250. How can you lose? Look here—even if the most fantastic things happen (or rather, if they don't happen) and a lot turns out to be worth only $25 per front foot, that's $1,000, and you're only paying $750!

Not only that, but Mr. Bixby, since he called on you himself, has no salesman's commission to pay and can afford to let you have it for 10 per cent less. Have you got cash? That's splendid—5 per cent off for cash. To you, only $641.25. You can practically be sure of tripling your money in three years, and if everything goes well you might more than quintuple it.

I don't want to imply that there is anything crooked about the proposal. I don't think there is. It's just that I was in Muscle Shoals and the Tri-cities a short time ago, and I carry a different picture of the area in my mind. The property Mr. Bixby is selling is in a town with a present population of only 5,500, and residential property has to be extremely choice in a town of this size to bring more than from $15 to $20 a front foot. It is true that all four towns are very close together, and if you want to call them all one community, and if the Muscle Shoals expansion turns out to be as big as Mr. Bixby and his friends expect, the price of $110 isn't fantastic; it's just pretty high.

One thing, however, is certain—somebody is going to be fleeced. If people flock in to work in the defense plants, they will be the ones to suffer. If they don't, the people to whom Mr. Bixby is selling lots will be stuck. In the long history of American land speculation the original speculators have rarely lost.

Luftwaffe Behind Bars

BY ALLEN A. MICHIE

London, by mail

THERE is no perceptible weakening of morale in the German airmen who are being captured in Britain. Once in a while a Luftwaffe pilot alights from a machine that has been shot down and cracks, "Thank God, I'm in jolly old England," but the vast majority are tough, truculent young Nazis who are fully convinced that Germany is winning the war in the air. Occasionally a bomber that carries a Gestapo officer in addition to the regular crew is brought down, but not often enough to make the presence of such an officer seem of any great significance.

Every German airman shot down is given a preliminary interrogation by R. A. F. intelligence officers on the spot and then a thorough going-over when he arrives at the prison camp. Nazi airmen captured in the south of England are taken to London and put on a train for a prison camp in the north, and the British guards usually manage to follow a long, slow route through a great deal of the city on the way to the railroad station. The Nazis are invariably surprised at the small amount of damage their bombers have been able to inflict on London's vast area (twenty-five miles across). And they always open their eyes at the absence of food queues and remark on the food in shop windows. Apparently they have expected to find most Londoners homeless and starving.

Unknown to the prisoners, the guards are supplied with dictaphones to record all conversation. Some of the remarks the Germans make are revealing, others simply amusing. A few weeks ago three members of a disabled bomber's crew were driven to Euston Station on their way north. From their remarks they seemed to be not professional party members but youngsters who had been attracted by the socialist appeal of National Socialism. This was how their conversation went:

As they stood on the grimy, black platform at Euston Station, the first Nazi muttered, "Filthy station . . . typical of Britain's decadence." A member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, neat as a pin in her blue uniform, passed by. "Hmm, so the British put their women in uniform," snorted the second Nazi. "Right step, left step, forward march into bed. . . . Shoot her in the morning . . . plenty more where she came from."

The three airmen were marched into a third-class rail-

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way carriage, whose comfortable plush seats contrasted with the hard bare boards of German third-class carriages. "Third class . . . plush seats . . . no wonder the British are soft," said one of the Germans.

As the train pulled out of the station a large American-sized limousine rolled past on the street bordering the tracks. "Pluto-democratic car," said one Nazi, pointing at it through the window. The pluto-democratic car pulled ahead of a tiny, typically British Morris. "Ah," said another Nazi, "German auto."

In the early months of the war, when captured German aviators were few, the army undertook to "educate" them politically. The attempt was a complete failure. The few who were anxious to hear the British side of the war were afraid to admit their deviation from the Nazi Party line, and whenever the British guards turned on the BBC news reports in German in the recreation rooms, the Nazis hurriedly left. British-edited German-language newspapers and English books and magazines remained unopened on the tables. The education of the Nazis has now been taken away from the War Office and put in the hands of a group of German refugees and English intellectuals who at least are showing originality in their propaganda methods. Radio loud-speakers have now been installed next door to the open-air latrines, and interested Germans can hide themselves away and listen to the BBC German bulletins in peace.

Reports that German airmen are all very young are untrue. Some boys of seventeen and eighteen have been captured, but the average age is around twenty-five, the same as in the R. A. F. Untrue also are the stories that only the squadron leader's machine is fully equipped with the necessary instruments and that the rest of the pilots simply follow the leader. All the Nazi planes I have examined, fighters as well as bombers, have been as well instrumented as any British or American plane.

All planes shot down, or what remains of them, are carefully examined for new devices and other clues as to the condition of the German war machine. For example, the substitution of a new metal in the construction of certain parts may indicate a vital shortage of some material. The manufacturer's stamp and date of production on the plane may bring a new German aircraft factory to the attention of the R. A. F.'s bomber command. Gasoline and lubricating oils are analyzed to discover source and quality. The Germans use a lower-octane gasoline for aviation purposes than the British and Americans, but its quality has been uniformly good and there have been no indications that the Nazis are short of it. German lubricating oil, on the other hand, has been of a poor quality for months and has given the Luftwaffe a good deal of engine trouble. Even the airman's clothes and personal papers are meticulously examined, since the maker's label on a new shirt might reveal the town near which the squadron was located.

Everybody's Business

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Railroads Miss the Train

IN THE week ending May 24 freight-car loadings on the American railroads totaled 866,000. This was a 26 per cent increase above the figure for the corresponding week in 1940, and it compared with a 1940 peak, reached last October, of 637,651 cars. At that point it was estimated that the roads had a surplus of about 76,000 cars, which was just about the minimum necessary if freight forwardings were to be handled smoothly and expeditiously. Today the margin is almost certainly less; yet we are nowhere near the loadings peak for 1941. That is expected to be reached in October, when official estimates anticipate that traffic movements will rise to 925,000 cars. By October 1 the railroads hope to add 50,000 new cars to their stock, but even so it is impossible to see how congestion is to be avoided. Indeed, the Association of American Railroads is now hinting at a much earlier crisis.

Just about a year ago a report was presented to the National Defense Advisory Committee pointing out that the defense program, then still in its infancy, would place an extremely heavy burden on the railroads, a burden which could not be met without a big increase in equipment. The report suggested that in order to be prepared for this expansion in traffic, and to avoid the risk of shortages of labor or materials as the defense program began to absorb all resources, the purchase of 500,000 new cars and 2,000 locomotives should be put in hand as quickly as possible. This proposal was sat upon heavily by Ralph Budd, the well-known railroad executive who was then the transport member of the NDAC and who now occupies a similar position in OPM, and was the occasion of scornful comment by most "practical" railroad executives. There was no need, it was said, to worry in the least about the ability of the railroads to meet all expected traffic demands. Nor was any planned expansion in carrying capacity required: left alone, the roads would order the new equipment as traffic developed.

As the seasonal traffic peak developed last fall, the Association of American Railroads did show symptoms of anxiety about the situation and went so far as to recommend that its members purchase 100,000 freight cars during the coming year. But having paid that modest tribute to foresight, it relapsed into complacency. On December 7, writing on this page, I called attention to the signs of a freight-car shortage in the course of 1941, by saying:

> No form of bottleneck can do more to slow up the defense program than railroad congestion. But that is something we are likely to experience six or twelve months hence unless drastic action is taken quickly. . . . The railroad signals are set at "Danger." Will the Defense Commission take heed or must we wait for action until demand crashes supply and the tracks are blocked?

Just after this article appeared, I noticed the following in the New York *Times* financial section:

> "Self-styled economists" in Washington are disseminating "a lot of nonsense" to the effect that disarmament expenditure

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> will unduly tax the capacity of the railroads, according to Samuel O. Dunn, a frequent speaker on railroad topics. "In spite of the huge expenditures for preparedness now beginning," said Mr. Dunn, "the railroads still have more reason for fearing they will not have enough traffic and earnings in the months and years immediately ahead than for fearing that they will be offered more traffic than they can move."

On January 21 of this year Mr. Budd said he was still of the opinion that existing transportation agencies under private ownership would be able to meet all needs of the defense program. The same day his optimism was buttressed by data made available by M. J. Gormley of the Association of American Railroads. Mr. Gormley estimated that the increase of freight traffic in 1941 compared with 1940 would not exceed 7 to 10 per cent, with a rise during the first quarter of about 9 per cent. Actually the first nine weeks of the year showed an expansion of 11.2 per cent in car loadings, and by March the weekly returns were spurting 20 per cent and more ahead of 1940. By April 1 the Shippers' Advisory Board was forecasting a 15 per cent increase over 1940 during the second quarter.

Meanwhile, the first note of doubt had been struck in OPM circles by W. Averell Harriman, then chief of the materials branch, who told the Traffic Club of Washington on February 13: "I am sure the railroads cannot guarantee that there will not be a tight situation in the autumn of 1941 or 1942." However, this leading railroad director hastened to reassure his audience. "I cannot agree," he said, "with the backseat drivers who contend that we should . . . force the railroads to buy some hundreds of thousands of freight cars when it is not clear that they are needed."

Barely two months later it became "clear" even to the American Association of Railroads that an awful lot of cars were needed in a terrible hurry. In addition to replacements, it told its members, they should buy 270,000 cars during the next thirty months. Allowing for retirements of 40,000 annually, this means the production in the given period of 370,000 cars. The *Wall Street Journal* commented:

> The decision of the A. A. R. . . . is a right-about face from the attitude taken until very recently. In some quarters it is felt that it is too late to avert some sort of car shortage next fall although the carriers will get some 50,000 to 60,000 additional new cars by that time.

Nevertheless, we now have a big equipment program, approaching that recommended nearly a year ago by the "unpractical" Washington economists. But here's the rub. In the past twelve months the car-building companies have taken on huge armament contracts, and in addition there is today a shortage of sheet steel, despite the many assurances from the steel industry that it would be able to deliver the goods. So we find one bottleneck thrust into another. No doubt there would have been shortages even if the steel and railroad industries had put their backs into expansion when they were first warned, but we should have gained the valuable production of many months, now lost forever.

Why is it that so many of our big corporation executives, who are supposed to owe their positions to unusual drive and foresight, have not displayed these qualities in planning for defense? Why have they ignored the lessons of the last war, the experience of every other country faced with similar problems? Why have they consistently minimized the economic repercussions of the defense program, which were so plainly visible to anyone able to read a chart? The answer in each case would seem to be a psychological inability to face the realities of the present emergency, an effort to escape its threatening implications to a system which profits by scarcity. It is the same attitude which, in other fields, has earned the dismal verdict: "Too little and too late."

In the Wind

NOT LONG AGO the Reverend Francis J. McConnell, Methodist Episcopal Bishop of New York, was waked at 2:15 in the morning by a ringing telephone. The voice on the wire told him that he was scheduled at that moment for a fifteen-minute radio talk on Spanish refugees, to be broadcast as part of the Milk Man's Matinee, a pre-dawn program on Station WNEW. Drowsily the Bishop protested that he had never agreed to speak. "You're scheduled," came the answer, "and you must begin immediately. You can talk into the telephone, and the microphone here at the studio will take your speech." The obliging Bishop pulled himself together and spoke for fifteen minutes on the plight of Spanish exiles in France. Next day inquiries were made. The station denied knowledge of the broadcast. It was all a hoax.

AN EMPLOYEE in a defense industry recently learned that he was on a list of persons suspected of being potential saboteurs. After careful investigation he discovered that he was on the list because he had been seen by an FBI agent in the Soviet Pavilion at the World's Fair two years ago.

THE COMMUNISTS have embarked on a campaign against Senator Wheeler. They class him as a warmonger and, because of his association with ex-Colonel Lindbergh, a conniver in the plot to have a concert of democratic and fascist states destroy the Soviet Union. This is part of a slight turn in the Communist line, which now opposes a negotiated peace because such a settlement would probably be made at the expense of the U. S. S. R.

GENEROSO POPE, pro-Fascist publisher of the two largest-selling Italian-American newspapers, gave editorial support to the President's "unlimited emergency" speech but omitted anti-Axis references in reporting the speech itself.

A REFUGEE recently arrived from Norway reports that a theatrical strike was taking place in that country a few weeks ago and may still be going on. It began after an ad lib act in an Oslo play was suppressed by German authorities. During the course of the play an actor dressed in the king's robes walked slowly across the stage. He said nothing until he disappeared into the wings. Then he thrust his head out and said, "Do you want me to come back?"

[The $5 prize for the best item received in May goes to C. R. of 11 East Tenth Street, New York, for his story about Father Curran and the America First Committee published on May 31.]

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A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

John L. Lewis and Casey Jones

And the switchman knew by the engine's moans
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

THAT song has spread across the country from Jackson, Tennessee, where they buried Casey. It seems to come from simpler, pleasanter times in America, even if also from a bad time for Casey. Today Isaac B. Tigrett is the big man of Jackson. He's a railroad man, too, better fixed if not better known than Casey. He was coming along as cashier of a country bank when Casey died. Today in Jackson he is Baptist, Mason, Rotarian, Democrat, railroad president, and president of a securities company. Also, he belongs to the Union League Club in Chicago and the Traffic Club in New York. He has gone farther at a faster rate than Casey did. As the reputed oldest railroad president in America in point of service, he speaks more clearly, I think, than some metropolitan financiers for a good many men who have made the same trip.

And what he says of America in general and John L. Lewis in particular is this: "When it becomes necessary for the people of this country to send representatives to New York to consult one man as to whether or not we may have fuel with which to keep our defense industries running, there surely must be something wrong either with us as a people or with our leaders."

It is a very easy matter in intellectual centers to dismiss Mr. Tigrett as a rural reactionary. But within his limits and on his side he is talking about the problem of bigness which has also preoccupied such a man as Justice Brandeis and which certainly has not been interrupted by the defense effort. Indeed, nothing has ever emphasized it quite so much. A great many Americans share the fear about the danger of power centered in the leaders of great unions. Even the friends of labor recognize in the national organizations through which they work a tremendous change from the old immediate relationship between workers and employers. The whole business is an old story, new only because of a change in the direction of complaint.

Even Mr. Tigrett is undoubtedly aware of the growth of huge centralized business and industry in this country during the last half-century. Big Business is not merely a politician's phrase but a fact. In Alabama, where Mr. Tigrett spoke, centralized steel in Pittsburgh and New York controlled the steel mills and the mines long before John L. Lewis had any such power as that about which Mr. Tigrett complains. Men in the mines of Alabama were dependent upon a far-off decision as to what wages they would get, what jobs they would have. People everywhere were dependent upon a far-off decision as to what they must pay for a piece of iron.

The rise of Mr. Lewis did not end that situation. Indeed, Mr. Lewis's power may be exactly as dangerous as Mr. Tigrett says it is. Labor cannot deny the problems of democracy involved in its own centralized bigness, but nobody can look at Big Labor with intelligence or honesty without recognizing it as a part of the same process which first produced Big Business.

Both, however, endow with a special significance now the question of how a democracy of all the people can deal with the tremendous powers that have grown up within it. Long before Lewis appeared, bad as he may be, Big Business used the separations of government in the American system to devise a legal system by which it could escape all control while using both federal and state powers to control the people it exploited. Big Government in America grew straight from the people's necessity to end the legalized anarchy which smart lawyers made for their big clients. Now the same lawyers do a good deal of the talking about labor's irresponsible power. And the funny part about it is that for once they may be right—or half right, which is better than usual.

The powers within our democracy have multiplied. Mr. Lewis is one of them. But he is certainly not the only one. Monopoly is another. Sometimes, as has been pointed out often enough, we seem to have developed in this democracy a feudalism in which Mr. Lewis is a powerful lord contending with such another powerful lord as, for instance, Mr. Morgan. The growth of government, before defense, was the growth of hope that all powers could be made subject to the welfare of the whole people. Sometimes the growth of government has seemed only to foster the growth of equality in conflict. But that is gain. Not even defense has so far succeeded in quieting the contentions of powers outside the government. Bigness is still the problem of democracy. The Nazis had a solution for it. The Communists had one. We do not like them. Have we got a better one? If we haven't, we might as well stop singing "God Bless America" and start singing "Casey Jones." Our democracy will be going the same way the Cannon Ball Express went and at the same rate of speed.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Notes by the Way

HAVE you a "little woman" in your home? Is she intelligent? Has she had a college education? And do you sometimes wonder why, since you have worked your head off to give her all the comforts of life, including a maid or two and a modern kitchen, cars and smart clothes and a bridge table, she seems dissatisfied with her "place in the home"? Then read "Of Men and Women" by Pearl S. Buck (John Day, $2). You may discover that you are harboring a "gunpowder woman" whose mental and physical energy so far outstrips the demands of running a modern home and a modern family that most of it goes to feed the fires of an undivine discontent which is likely to explode in Reno or lead to the psychoanalyst's couch, and which in any case fills the "English-style" suburban home with the fumes of insecurity.

The pioneer housekeeper had a real job. She was a partner in a struggle, and her work was creative and satisfying as well as hard. She performed an important social as well as domestic function. Today, to be sure, there are thousands of women in the lower-income groups who are allowed to be their husbands' partners, but only under the compulsion of a desperate economic need which robs the partnership of its satisfactions. But Mrs. Buck is primarily concerned with that large group of women who have received the same education as men and then "settled down." For these women, keeping house and raising a small family may be a full-time job while the children are very young. But the kindergarten takes the children at a younger and younger age, and keeping house has become a matter of a few daily hours of boring and sterile tasks. So, after a few years, the stage is set for trouble.

It is obvious that there are thousands of women in the United States who do not have enough to do, yet men have succeeded so well in convincing them that their place is in the home that they are the first to denounce anyone, particularly another woman, who questions the ancient shibboleth. And when a woman insists on taking part in the world's work as a doctor or a lawyer or a business women she soon finds that she is barred from the highest posts in any of these professions, not because her ability is inferior but because the world has decided that she can't run a bank or deliver a baby as well as a man can. Needless to say, her fellow-women are the first to say so—just as in China the fiercest resistance to the abolition of the horrible custom of binding the feet of females came from women.

Chinese women resisted the change because their helplessness had given them an indirect power over men as vicious as that exercised over American men by "gunpowder women" demanding more and more luxuries with which to assuage their discontent. It is vicious because it is based on an assumption of inequality which poisons the relationship between men and women and between parents and children and in the end corrupts social relationships as well.

In Mrs. Buck's view privilege has been as great a curse to American women as prejudice has been to American Negroes. Women have been denied the necessity, as Negroes have been denied the opportunity, to take part in the world's work. And she thinks discontented women constitute as great a threat to the democratic way of life as any other discontented minority. For in her opinion American women, after so many generations of having been denied responsibility, do not really want freedom; they are glad of an excuse to take refuge in the home; and as a result one source of a great danger, the danger of fascism, lies in the "masses of half-ignorant, half-idle, indolent, and discontented American women . . . ready to run to the call of anyone clever enough to justify their futility and to sentimentalize their sex."

She thinks that men are mainly responsible for this state of affairs, that privilege is the bribe man pays to woman in order to keep his most precious possession, his belief in his own superiority merely because he is a male. But as she points out, it is no accident that the suppression of women is one of the first tenets of fascism—which eventually enslaves men as well as women.

> . . . in the United States neither man nor woman is ready for democracy—man by reason of his strength and woman by reason of her weakness . . . neither is willing to discover that jewel point where liberties will meet, and the balance of liberty for both be found which is true democracy.

For at that point man must give up his illusion of superiority; woman must give up her present privileges, "of remaining ignorant in spite of education," of mental laziness, of not having to think thoroughly through anything because she knows the ultimate decision will not rest with her.

Mrs. Buck scoffs at the idea that if women were given genuine equality they would lose that "femininity" about which both men and women become so eloquent when they are defending the status quo of the sexes. The "doll," to be sure, might disappear; and Mrs. Buck thinks the "exceptional woman" who is so often desexed by the ruthless fight she must make to achieve even an inferior place in a man's world would disappear also. But equality would not wipe out the exciting difference between the sexes; nature has taken care of that. It *would* wipe out the superior-inferior relationship which today poisons so many marriages and keeps both men and women from achieving true maturity, either as human beings or as citizens of a world in crisis.

I have touched only the high points of a provocative and closely reasoned analysis. Mrs. Buck's comparison of the home in China and in America is particularly interesting. Her discussions of women and war, education, and the old issue of women in politics are intelligent and fresh. She is, thank heaven, not one of those irritating women known as "feminists" who substitute female for male superiority as their basic assumption. Her thesis is that both men and women would be much happier if women were allowed, or forced, to function, not as angels or as concubines or both, but as human beings.

MARGARET MARSHALL

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Croce on History

HISTORY AS THE STORY OF LIBERTY. By Benedetto Croce. W. W. Norton and Company. $3.75.

THE most obvious significance of Croce's book lies in the fact that this impassioned plea for liberty as the basic value of history has come out of Mussolini's Italy. Croce writes: "The adoration of the state or of might (*Macht*), born in Germany and introduced among other peoples, is nothing more than a base affection, not of citizens but of liveried servants and courtiers, for might as such, which is vainly adorned with sacred and moral emblems. . . . It is in fact stupid to exalt the state."

The ultimate significance of the book is that it represents a probably final word by a great philosopher on an aspect of philosophical thought which has been the preoccupation of his life—the philosophy of history. The fact that the book embodies a series of essays, not completely unified, detracts slightly, though only slightly, from its value as a comprehensive summary of his thought.

Croce approaches the problem of history from the standpoint of historiography. The question is: How can history be recorded? It cannot be recorded merely as a chronicle of facts and events, for these facts and events have a meaning. But their meaning can be appreciated only in the context of the meaning of the whole. Thus all but the most superficial historical records are involved in the problem of the meaning of history as such. Yet the historical perspective of the historian is itself relative, and his tendency is to interpret the whole past so as to justify a particular view of life, of society, and of history in his own present. (Thus a change in the party line prompts Communist historians to change their estimate of the character of Ivan the Terrible.)

Though Croce's entire work deals with this problem of historical relativism, he is inclined to underestimate its acuteness. Against all rationalists who imagine that it is easy to gain a position of rational transcendence over the relative stuff of history, he affirms the historical character of all thought; yet he criticizes Troeltsch for taking the problem of historical relativism too seriously. He believes that it is difficult, but not impossible, to achieve a "balanced judgment" which will correct the misinterpretations caused by the "arbitrary will of individuals." Yet the most plausible misinterpretations of the past arise not from an arbitrary or wilful falsification of historical data but from relative perspectives which are unconscious of the relativity and inadequacy of their position. The principle which underlies Croce's balanced judgment is that the interpretation of history must be governed by the total and perennial human situation and not by some particular human situation of this or that epoch. He finds the perennial factor he seeks in the struggle for freedom.

The most illuminating portions of Croce's work are his critical appraisals of alternative philosophies of history. He rejects naturalistic interpretations which regard history as scarcely more than an extension of the principle of evolution in biology. He is equally critical of eighteenth-century and later utopianism, which finds the meaning of history in the culmination of certain social values within history; and he wisely observes that to this utopianism it is not even clear whether history culminates in the realization of social ideals *ad finitum* or *ad infinitum*. Marxist utopianism is subjected to a particularly severe criticism because it seeks to realize perfect equality in history, a purpose which betrays it into the destruction of liberty. Croce points out, I think correctly, that equality is a transcendent principle of justice and not a simple possibility of history, and that where this is not understood, utopian dreams turn into tyrannical realities. Unfortunately his criticism of Marxism is marred by a failure to understand the economic, as against the political, factors in social life, an error which blinds him to the most illuminating elements in Marxist thought.

Croce's thought is, of course, closely related to Hegel's, but he is careful to underline the differences, as well as the similarities, between his and Hegel's philosophy: "Hegel aimed at resolving history into philosophy by giving it the movement of a system which develops and is completed in time. We, on the other hand, aim at resolving philosophy into history, considering it as an abstract moment of historical thought itself, and its systems as historical situations historically transient and historically justified." Thus the absurd culmination of history in the Prussian military state, or any similar realization of the eternal in the temporal, is avoided.

Croce is careful to point out that his idea of "balanced judgment" has nothing in common with either an impartiality which abstains from all judgments or a neutrality which merely finds a mean between contrasting judgments. The true historian "cannot remain immersed in events," but neither can he "stand outside them and move in a void. It is necessary to move through them, to feel the impact and the agony which they generate in order to stand above them, rising from suffering to judgment and knowledge."

But there can be no such transcendent judgment without a principle of judgment which transcends all particular historical circumstances. He finds this in the principle of liberty. "We always tend toward liberty and work for it even when we seem to be working for something else; liberty is realized in every thought and action that has the character of truth, poetry, and goodness." History is not the story of increasing liberty but the record of the fight for liberty under ever-changing circumstances "The problem of freedom is perpetually resolved and perpetually recurs" because it is the desire for liberty which defines man as man.

One would think that the nature of man required community as well as liberty, and that history could be more adequately described as the interaction between these two partially contradictory and partially complementary desires. Croce tends to identify them. He declares: "These two requirements form a single need, for we cannot conceive of liberty without social organization, nor can we conceive of society and state without liberty, for it would no longer be human."

One difficulty with Croce's interpretation of history is that it seems to give no meaning to history as an ongoing process with cumulative effects. Croce admits that modern man must win his freedom against the tendency toward tyranny in a technical civilization, whereas primitive man asserted his freedom against the necessities of nature, but he seems to find no meaning in this historical development, tragic or otherwise.

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Such criticisms and questions must not be allowed to obscure the greatness of this book. It is the work of a profound thinker who has meditated deeply on the most perplexing problems of human existence and who touches no issue without illuminating it. REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Famous Fortunes

MEN OF WEALTH. By John T. Flynn. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.

APPLYING the biographical method to economic history, and thereby making more palatable to the general reader what is often regarded as a dull subject, Mr. Flynn tells the story of twelve famous men of wealth. In selecting his subjects he has chosen, not the makers of the greatest fortunes, but those whose methods of accumulation seem most representative of the economic environments in which they flourished. Thus he begins with Jacob Fugger, the Bavarian banker, who at the dawn of the capitalist era financed the rising house of Hapsburg and reaped a rich reward in mining monopolies. He ends with J. Pierpont Morgan, who achieved power and millions by perfecting the art of manipulating the paper tokens of wealth.

How do individuals become rich? Not by working with their own hands, says Mr. Flynn, but by "getting a fraction, large or small, of the produce created by the collaboration of many men." Every step in mechanical progress has made that collaboration more fruitful, and every new refinement in the technique of credit has made it possible for those controlling money and machines to enlarge their "take." But as this book illustrates, few really significant fortunes have been constructed without the assistance of special privileges and monopoly rights. The one man among Mr. Flynn's dozen who is an exception to the rule is that maverick of capitalism Robert Owen. He made his pile in the highly competitive cotton industry during the early stages of Britain's Industrial Revolution, despite the fact that he treated his workers with quixotic generosity according to standards of his day. And then he spent every penny of his fortune promoting socialism.

Mr. Flynn has shown commendable restraint in not pressing historical analogies too hard in support of his well-known views on current controversies. But occasionally the temptation has proved irresistible. Thus he treats John Law, whose discovery that money could be created through the agency of bank loans led to the Mississippi Bubble, as a precursor of Franklin D. Roosevelt, implying that New Deal finance will suffer a similar collapse. This analogy would have more validity if it were possible to show any similarity between the basic economic situation of eighteenth-century France and that of the United States in the 1930's. John Law's monetary experiments were attempted in a country of peasants and handicraft workers, where the possibilities of expanded production were extremely limited. Thus the rapid multiplication of the means of exchange almost immediately overtook the supply of goods, making inflation inevitable. But under the New Deal the margin between current and potential production has been so vast that only now, with the tremendous extension of deficit financing necessitated by the defense program, have we come within hailing distance of inflation. And today the causes and dangers of inflation and the methods of checking it are widely understood.

Mr. Flynn, it seems to me, also strains the function of historical analogy in his comparison of Cecil Rhodes with Hitler. Rhodes, it is true, entertained absurd theories of the basic superiority of the Anglo-Saxon and dreamed grandiosely of uniting the world under the British flag. But he thought of that world as a universalized version of the Empire, made up of self-governing dominions, and not as a collection of colonies and vassal states completely subject to London, in which only Englishmen were first-class citizens. He harbored no ideas of constructing his world state by force but looked rather to the slow processes of education. Thus he sought to give permanence to his vision by the Rhodes scholarships, which were to be available not only to citizens of the dominions and the United States but also, a fact which Mr. Flynn omits, to Germans.

There are a number of errors in this book which are perhaps worth pointing out for future correction. The British general defeated and killed by the Boers at Majuba Hill was General Sir George Colley, not Colby; the indemnity paid by France after 1870 was five milliard francs not five million; and the author of the "History of Great American Fortunes" is Gustavus Myers, not Meyer. Mr. Flynn also speaks of the machine-breakers of the British industrial revolution as "Ludites, named after Ned Ludite, a village idiot who to be avenged on his tormentors broke some machinery." Actually, they were called Luddites, and the Ned Ludd from whom they took their name was, according to G. D. H. Cole, the leading authority on the period, probably a mythical character who, like an earlier symbol of resistance to oppression, Robin Hood, was supposed to have his headquarters in Sherwood Forest. KEITH HUTCHISON

"Parade Without Music"

SOMETHING OF A HERO. By I. J. Kapstein. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.75.

THIS is a thoroughly American novel, a novel of scene, character, and sentiment which could not conceivably be transposed to another land. It is a democratic casebook, a symposium of personal histories covering the years from 1907 to 1929 and showing the development of the city of Persepolis through the experiences of its representative citizens: the politician, the lawyer, the banker, the bootlegger, the small storekeeper, and the Civil War veteran, John Cantrell, who serves as hub to these spinning lives.

Though there is nothing directly imitative of Thomas Wolfe in this first novel, Kapstein's talents are in many ways similar. He has Wolfe's breadth of interest, his true ear for dialogue, his talent for welding a dozen parallel stories into a solid cable of narrative with all ends spliced in. But more urgently than Wolfe he has something to say, and the discipline with which to say it effectively. In these nearly six hundred pages there is little waste as the author shows by concrete and credible example the relation between the American creed and the too frequently futile struggle of faithful men to live by it. Despite the convictions of John Cantrell, the author's advocate, the many lesser characters

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make a mockery of the freedom we boast; prejudice runs rabid through Persepolis—against the Jews, the Negroes, the rich, the poor. There are few good neighbors.

Dr. Dave Bandler, the son of the Jewish junk dealer, discovers that medicine in Persepolis must be practiced exclusively by and for white Protestant Americans. Indie, the Negro prize fighter, dreaming always of his golden island where he will be free and contentedly alone, is fouled whenever he lifts his guard in confidence of American fair play. Old Marius, the Socialist, earnestly but clumsily trying to better the lot of the poor, rests at last with his head caved in on the floor of the union hall. Through all these stories runs the author's banal refrain, "The creed must not be separated from the deed," but it *is* separated, tragically. Only three of the characters find deeds to do that conflict neither with the democratic creed nor with their own integrity.

Mr. Kapstein is admirably impartial in presenting the beliefs of these contrary characters. All people, he feels, are fundamentally decent. Joe, the killer, has his spot of gentleness. Smitty, the "peacherino's" crooked lover, sincerely yearns for another chance. The capitalist's belief that he is helping labor by exploiting it is poignantly true to life.

This is a book built with care and economy, a book of continuous suspense leading to chapters of sheer physical drama that could only be bettered, perhaps, by something of the humor which is as normal to man as charity or lust. John Cantrell, dying because he fought for both labor and capital, saw the strikers pass as a "parade without music." That is the book.

HASSOLDT DAVIS

Inside Japan

HONORABLE ENEMY. By Ernest O. Hauser. Duell, Sloan, and Pearce. $2.50.

JAPAN UNMASKED. By Hallett Abend. Ives Washburn. $3.

BEHIND THE RISING SUN. By James R. Young. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

THE FIGHT FOR THE PACIFIC. By Mark J. Gayn. William Morrow and Company. $3.

IF WE are to judge by the four books listed above, journalistic interest has shifted abruptly, so far as the Orient is concerned, from China to the island empire of Japan. This is fortunate, because there has been a scarcity of good books on Japan in recent years. Those that have appeared have either been lyrically partial, like Willard Price's writings, or superficially hostile to everything Japanese. None of the present books are pro-Japanese, but their criticisms are in no sense superficial. All four are written by seasoned journalists and are based on exceptionally wide experience in the East.

Of all recent books on Japan, Ernest Hauser's is probably the most satisfactory for the ordinary reader. It is a vividly written, yet thoughtful interpretation. It is enough of an exposé to satisfy the sensation seeker, yet it goes a long way toward explaining why the Japanese are what they are. It tells why the Japanese have supported their government's expansionist policies, and how those policies have affected everyday life in Japan. Fundamentally, Mr. Hauser's argu-

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—HARRY HANSEN, *World-Telegram*

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ment runs, the Japanese are not a modern people and cannot be understood if viewed as such. For all their veneer of modernity, they remain feudal and Oriental in mind and social organization. And the trend of the times is to strengthen rather than weaken this essential characteristic. Nor is Japan to be feared as a strong rising power. If it is to be feared at all, the reason lies in the fact that its weakness has resulted in an alliance with Germany and Italy which may lead to an unwanted conflict.

Hallett Abend, who first broke the news of the Tripartite Pact, tells of the secret clauses in that pact whereby Germany and Italy pledge themselves to use their influence to aid Japan in acquiring control of French Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies. But he also describes in detail the bankruptcy of Japanese policies—Japan's failure in China and the heavy sacrifice that has been imposed on the civilian population. His catalogue of Japan's economic woes is perhaps the most complete that has been compiled by any qualified observer. Abend also vividly portrays the hostility to Japan in the Dutch East Indies and American Hawaii. Although he has no illusions as to Japan's strength, he is desperately concerned lest our opposition to its aims involve us in a war that no one wants. This, he believes, should be avoided if possible, but he fears that in the end we shall have no choice but to accept Japan's challenge and fight to a finish.

"Behind the Rising Sun" is a report, cast largely in the form of personal anecdote, of one of America's most experienced journalists in Japan. Mr. Young has the distinction of having been arrested and held for two months by the Japanese police because they did not like the tone of some of his articles. His offense lay in describing in some detail the effect of the war on Japan, a subject which he enlarges upon in his book. It is perhaps natural, in view of his experiences, that he should be intensely critical of Japan; but his criticisms are so sweeping that a reader unfamiliar with the East will be at a loss to understand how a country with such glaring weaknesses can be of serious concern to the Western world.

The background of the coming war in the East is described comprehensively in "The Fight for the Pacific." The book is a veritable encyclopedia. It covers not only China, Japan, Singapore, Indo-China, and the Philippines, but Mongolia—where the author was born—Russia, Alaska, Britain, and Thailand. It gives the essentials of recent history in each of these countries in so far as that history bears on the Far East. As a handbook it is probably unexcelled, but it has the weaknesses of a handbook. Because it covers such a vast area its treatment of particular aspects of the situation is necessarily rather superficial. Although reasonably accurate on the whole, it is marred by numerous minor errors. Yet it deserves to be widely read because it brings together more general information than any other recent book on the Far East.

MAXWELL S. STEWART

America and the War

AMERICA AND TOTAL WAR. By Fletcher Pratt. Smith and Durrell. $3.

AMERICA CAN WIN. By Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson. The Macmillan Company. $1.75.

OF THESE two books on America and the war, Fletcher Pratt's is by far the better, although it must be said that it suffers from a jerky style. Pratt makes the correct observations on the war in Europe and notes the displacement of the infantry-artillery combat team by the armored-air team, the revival of mobility and surprise, and the reappearance of verbal field orders. As to the United States, Pratt concludes that we have less to fear from a fifth-column movement than have the nations of Europe, that a direct invasion of this country is a military impossibility, and that while an attack through Latin America would stand a better chance of success, normal precautions on our part should suffice to forestall it. Fletcher Pratt is not a great military thinker or theorist, but he does possess the ability to present military theory in an understandable manner, and his aggressive and patriotic tone will doubtless be stimulating to many.

The publishers advertise Wheeler-Nicholson's book as a "concise" document, "based on realistic military logic," which expounds a "common-sense plan for utilizing our

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present strength." Among these common-sense plans is a project to send a division of Irish-Americans to Eire under the command of "Wild Bill" Donovan, and another is a scheme to place General Weygand in command of all the Allied forces, including those of the United States. Wheeler-Nicholson's principal suggestion is that the untrained American conscripts should be sent to garrison the various British possessions in Asia, Africa, and throughout the world. The native and other British troops on duty at these posts would thus be released for service in Europe, and the American troops could finish their training while performing police duty in the colonies. One does not have to be a military expert to detect the obvious weaknesses of this scheme, and it is probably the one plan which both the military and political authorities of America and Britain could unite in condemning. Even were there more merit in Wheeler-Nicholson's projects, it would be obscured by his manner of presentation, which is rambling and evangelistic.

HARVEY S. FORD

The Nazi Courts at Work

SKELETON OF JUSTICE. By Edith Roper and Clara Leiser. E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.

FROM 1936 to the spring of 1939 Edith Roper was the court correspondent of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung.* The appointment to such a position of a person as disloyal to Nazi ideals as Mrs. Roper had already shown herself was clearly a mistake, but it is a comfort to know that even the infallible machine that Adolf built occasionally slips. Allowing her to leave the country in possession of her voluminous notes was an even greater mistake. Add these mistakes together and the result is a fascinating account of the changes in German judicial procedure since Hitler's assumption of power.

The strength of this book lies in its painstaking documentation, which the author somehow accomplishes without for one moment fatiguing the attention of the lay reader. Scores of case histories are recited in detail; dozens of German judges, from those on the powerful People's Court to police-court magistrates, are named and sharply characterized. The organization of Mrs. Roper's material, credited to Clara Leiser, who rendered the account into English, plays no small role in the success of the book. Individual facts are gathered under such comprehensive and revealing chapter headings as The Jewish Trials, *Rassenschande* (Race-Shame) Trials, Foreign Exchange Trials, and The Political Trials.

The scandal of the Reichstag-fire trial begot a literature of its own, but to base our condemnation of fascist justice upon such sensational cases is not altogether safe. Herr Goebbels and his Ministry of Propaganda could quickly point to the Sacco-Vanzetti case as an instance of our own injustice. Infinitely more damning for fascism are Mrs. Roper's quiet accounts of hundreds of cases involving obscure individuals, cases that never reached the headlines. Injustice is shown to be not the accidental exception but the prevailing rule. This is not just another book about the horror inside Germany but an invaluable reference work for every anti-fascist.

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Wild Sea Water

SOUTH STAR. By John Gould Fletcher. The Macmillan Company. $2.

WHEN, more than ten years ago, I first read John Gould Fletcher's variously colored Symphonies and Irradiations, I thought, "This is perhaps a poetry—like Edmund Spenser's—to which I will have to grow up."

Now I have read "South Star." It opens on a historical narrative, The Story of Arkansas. None of the twists of the rhythm, none of the varieties of rhyme—every device of couplet, quatrain, blank verse, free verse, short line to long line, invocation, lyric interlude is used—halt its mighty, headlong, irresistible prosiness. The events move like a high-school pageant. The characters have the animation of equestrian statuary: De Soto is "an armored man—a knight of ancient Spain"; "A marvelous vision cheered La Salle's stern heart"; "The steady gaze of Jefferson . . ."; "Then Woodruff came on. . . . And James Miller too came on. . . . And the governors came, Izard and Pope and Fulton. . . . And Albert Pike came. . . ." The cumulative effect can be seen in the lines:

> Through the swamps, through the lake, through the clay,
> Sinking down to their bridle reins,
> They stagger and slash, but they find not a way;
> So they ride back again for their pains.

After fifty pages of this come lyrics of Arkansas, the Upper South, the Deep South. Whatever their theme, the matter-of-fact still pursues them. Here are lines from the first five: "My father's watch this is, and it is old"; "Here was I fashioned and made"; "Low bosoms gleamed, the fiddlers scraped like mad"; "I have lived long. . . . Have felt the salty taste of kisses and the cold ache of being tired"; "Close by the door there hung a long lean scythe/Which, ere lawn-mowers came, was oft in play." This must be a falling-off from the 1939 Pulitzer Prize poems. I turned back to them.

The earliest suggest some of the graces and strangenesses of Chinese poems, without their brevity. If they are exotic, with "pale terraces" and "lacquered mandarin moments" and "flamboyant crenellations," the words are appropriate to one another; the repetitions and phrase permutations, the various "mood-movements," recall forms in music. But as they begin to move from "pure poetry" to personal meaning and observation, this resemblance diminishes. The orchestrations are ruined by an apparent belief that any theme, repeated and expanded, gains in significance. It is all done with pedals.

If I am right, if feeling, sincerity, industry, persistence have not been enough, what is it, for poetry, that corresponds to the 10 per cent of "wild sea water" without which fish in an artificial medium may not survive?

LLOYD FRANKENBERG

In Early Issues of The Nation
THE DIARY OF GINO SPERANZA
Reviewed by Gaetano Salvemini
CONSTANCE ROURKE:
NOTES ON HER PERSONALITY AND WORK
By Margaret Marshall

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IN BRIEF

THE DAM. By Jerome Ellison. Random House. $2.

A short novel with a happy ending, telling about a Chicago construction engineer forced out of work by the depression and how he rehabilitates himself and his family when he is placed in charge of an important WPA project. A few Dos Passos touches attempt to relate the individuals' lives and tribulations to the crazy pattern of the United States in the 1930's, but they neither impede nor add much to the weight of a simple tale about honest, well-meaning American people anxious to do their rightful work.

THE CAPTAIN FROM CONNECTICUT. By C. S. Forester. Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

Another spanking good mizzenmast and broadside yarn by the author of "Captain Horatio Hornblower," this time about the War of 1812, when American commerce destroyers were preying on British convoys as relentlessly, though hardly as efficiently, as the Germans are now.

MY DEAR BELLA. By Arthur Kober. Random House. $2.

A collection of twenty-two delightful stories by the foremost living authority on family life and dialect in the Bronx, with additional local color supplied through illustrations by Hoff.

THOSE TORN FROM EARTH. By Frederick Hollander. Liveright Publishing Corporation. $2.50.

A somewhat fantastic and shapeless but moving odyssey of artists driven from the Third Reich and carrying on their work in new fatherlands not yet "purified" by the Nazis.

HOUSING FOR DEFENSE. A Review of the Role of Housing in Relation to America's Defense. Factual findings by Miles L. Colean and the Program for Action of the Housing Committee of the Twentieth Century Fund. $1.50.

From an extremely thorough and valuable analysis of the basic elements of a national housing policy in all its aspects, in the light of the experience of 1917-1918, the sound conclusion is drawn that an immediate plan of action is necessary to avoid the mistakes and delays of that time. More debatable is the finding that "private industry has the capacity to provide the major part of the housing needs of our defense program." Taken as a premise in the program of action, it raises some knotty problems, especially that of rent control, which a more candid use of the factual findings might avoid.

PUBLISHED THIS WEEK

FOR THE HEATHEN ARE WRONG. An Impersonal Autobiography. By Eugene Bagger. Little, Brown $3.

SEA POWER IN THE MACHINE AGE. By Bernard Brodie. Princeton University Press. $3.75.

THE THEATER OF THE GOLDEN ERA IN CALIFORNIA. By George R. MacMinn. Caxton. $5.

AERIAL VAGABOND. By Bessie Owen. Liveright. $3.

DANIEL DE LEON: SOCIAL ARCHITECT. By Arnold Petersen. New York Labor News Company. $2.50.

CROSS WINDS OF EMPIRE. By Woodbern E. Remington. John Day. $3.

LEGAL MISCELLANIES: SIX DECADES OF CHANGES AND PROGRESS. By Henry W. Taft. Macmillan. $3.

ROD OF IRON: THE ABSOLUTE RULERS OF ENGLAND. By Milton Waldman. Houghton, Mifflin. $3.50.

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In 1933, I put my findings in a book entitled "Enough for Everybody," published by Bobbs-Merrill. This was largely an analysis of our socio-economic ills. Later, I wrote a synthesis, or a way out of our difficulties.

As a trained economist, I say that my proposals are the first comprehensive plan since the one by Karl Marx (all others are fragmentary, with no blueprints for thoroughgoing action), with this difference: I do not ask to impoverish the rich in order to enrich the poor. I do not ask the dictatorship of any group. When there is enough for everybody, we don't have to hurt anybody to achieve the general well being. With our potential abundance liberated and rationally distributed, we can well maintain the high standards of living while raising the low standards.

Also, as a practical man, I have woven no theory that may not work in practice. Instead, my plan merely proposes to carry to their completion many of the creative partial adjustments already made in the New Age. A democracy, freed from the ills of maladjustment which brought many a past civilization to its knees, will, because of its inherent vitality, grow healthy and dynamic, and give us the real prosperity we want.

When I completed the manuscript in 1935, I let it rest for two reasons. First, I wanted to see if my thesis can stand the acid test of changing times. Second, I waited for the psychological hour when my proposals would have the chance of a hearing.

The hour has struck now. And on rereading the manuscript I find that my proposals would also help fortify the democracies in their life-and-death struggle with totalitarianism. They would rid the economic order—of which our rearmament program is an integral part—of its anachronisms and its insufficiencies. They would help create a faith in democracy to surpass the fanatical faith of the Nazis.

To re-write the manuscript from the viewpoint of the war which broke out after its completion would take a full-time job of some months. To do this, I must put a capable man in my place to run my business, for I no longer have the means to retire again. Additional funds might well be used to supplement the publisher's advertising expenditures.

Therefore, I make the following offer to a person of means who would sponsor my book. I will give in return for his investment a share in the proceeds of the book. It is expected to have a large sale. Besides its sound and timely thesis, it will contain autobiographic sketches of my varied and adventurous life. These, I am told, would add color and life to the otherwise impersonal content of a politico-economic treatise.

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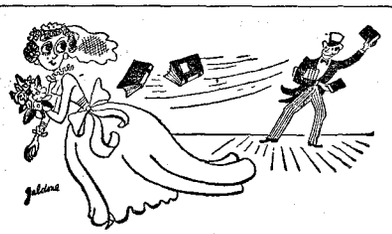

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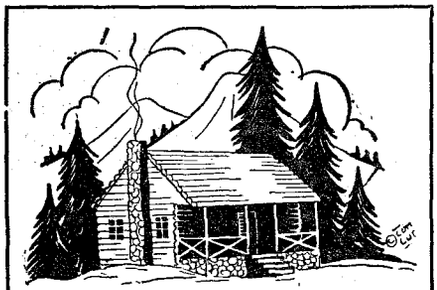

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MUSIC

WITH no brilliant stage spectacle to claim one's attention at the recent concert performance of "Four Saints in Three Acts" in Town Hall, one gave it wholly to Virgil Thomson's music—to the unique method and its delightful and at times moving result. By separating and differentiating the flat repetitions of a Gertrude Stein verbal sequence Thomson's music articulates and differentiates them, gives them point and even sense; the music also imparts to them its own structure, climax; and its effect is often the most delightful humor. Some of the humor consists in skilful musical pointing up—by the high-lighting of a group of words, the placing of it in relation to its context—of Miss Stein's surprises and irrelevances of juxtaposition; and to these Thomson adds occasional incongruities of his own contriving between words and music—words of little or no sense or weight, and style and structure of great emotional import and weight in the music. But when such music is given to words like the "led, said, wed, dead" sequence the result is very moving. And in addition to the pleasure from the work there was the pleasure from the superb voice and style of Edward Matthews, the fine singing of Beatrice Robinson Wayne, the magnificent work of the chorus, in the performance expertly directed by Alexander Smallens.

A few days before this beautiful performance of a sophisticated work by trained Negro singers the fourth Coffee Concert at the Museum of Modern Art offered Negro religious music sung by members of the Reverend Utah Smith's congregation of the Church of God in Christ, Newark, who used only their fine natural voices and innate musical feeling. Recalling what such occasions can be made into one was impressed by the managerial skill and tact that had made these people feel at ease and had then placed them on the stage and left the rest entirely to them—left it to the Reverend Smith himself to run his show and get tangled up engagingly in his words, his ideas, his guitar, his wings, and left it to the others to sing and act their naive musical narratives with complete absorption, with affecting intensity, and in some instances with exciting vocal and musical style.

Decca Set 185 ($2.75) offers a number of the most popular Chopin Valses—the Grande Valse Brillante Op. 18 (23191); Op. 69 No. 1 and the posthumous Valse in E minor (23192); Op. 64 Nos. 1 and 2, and Op. 70 No. 1 (23193)—played with grace and good taste by Robert Goldsand. The performances, which are better than Cortot's on Victor and Kilenyi's on Columbia, are moderately well recorded; but Op. 64 No. 2, in my review set, has a bad rattle.

In Victor Set P-61 ($2) the Golden Gate Quartet give excellent performances of some of their Bible Tales: "Jonah and the Whale" and "Preacher and the Bear" (27322); "Noah" and "Job" (27323); "John the Revelator" and "Sampson" (27324). Victor Set P-53 ($2) offers six English folk dances played by the Folk Dance Band under Ronnie Munro, with directions for the dances. The first volume of Latin-American folk music recorded by the guitarist Oyanguren (Decca Set 174, $2.75) I have not found interesting. There are some good things in Folk Songs of the Americas (Victor Set P-55, $3.50), and others that I don't care for; some of the foreign songs are sung—by Elsie Houston, among others—in the original foreign languages, but others are sung in English by an American quartet.

Concerning the wavering in pitch that I have reported hearing occasionally on Victor and Columbia records a reader writes to explain that it is caused by a common defect in records—"an eccentricity between the grooves of a pressing and the center hole" which can be observed in the oscillation of the pickup as it moves across the record. He points out that an oscillation of 1/16 of an inch means that near the center of the record "a sustained note would vary within frequency limits nearly a quarter-tone apart. . . . An extraordinary number of records have an eccentricity of as much as 1/32 of an inch, which is usually not too objectionable except on sustained notes and near the center of the record. When the eccentricity becomes greater than 1/32 of an inch, records have noticeable waver . . . and are, in my opinion, defective records which the companies ought to reject in the first place, or exchange if sold." My correspondent tells me that "correspondence with the Victor Company about two years ago brought forth a smug reply that their records had no eccentricity" (he would have got the same answer from Columbia). And his conclusion is "If you could bring this matter before the public the companies might eventually recognize the value of correcting eccentricity."

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Few Vote for Fordism

Dear Sirs: The striking feature of the recent NLRB election in Ford's River Rouge plant was not the victory won by the C. I. O. or the large vote polled by the A. F. of L. but the emphatic repudiation of Henry Ford reflected in the very small "neither" vote—less than 2,000 out of a total of nearly 78,000. The reasons for it are perfectly clear to anyone who has had a chance to observe, even casually, the innumerable irritations that a Ford worker must endure.

As one approaches any of the gates of the Ford empire, one is greeted with a barked-out "What's your business here?" from one of a group of men in civilian clothes who look more like loiterers than attendants who might be expected to give out information and directions. These loiterers, one learns, are the Ford service men, members of the privileged strong-arm squad, who keep an ever-watchful eye on the production men and see that the law, as Ford makes it, is unflinchingly enforced.

One of the rules is that there shall be no smoking anywhere within the 12,000 acres of the River Rouge domain. This is not merely a precautionary measure; it is a projection of Ford's personal asceticism. Smoking is prohibited in every nook and cranny of the place, including the foundry, where smoke and fire are always present, and the washrooms, where smoking could not possibly be harmful or dangerous. So absolute is this prohibition, enforced by the way without the aid of signs, that buddies changing shifts are likely to remark, "I'll think of you in here when I get out and light my first cigarette."

There are no chairs anywhere within reach of the production men; and in the most highly mechanized production plant in the world men must squat on the floor to eat their lunch, for which they are allowed fifteen minutes or half an hour. Anyone caught using the lavatories to rest his weight was, until quite recently, subject to dismissal, and there was usually a service man around to report the offense.

Henry Ford is referred to by both service and production men as "he." "He" will do this, "he" will do that, "he" will not tolerate the other. But "he" received few votes. During the tally, one ballot was found on which only the word "Christ" was written. The company watchers protested against counting it void, insisting that it was meant as a vote for Henry Ford.

A number of the service men and some members of the supervisory force, apparently under instructions from the company, tried to vote. When they were challenged, they claimed to be doing various sorts of work auxiliary to production. One of them said he was a "pipe-leak-looker-ater." Another said he was not a foreman but just a "gang boss." "How many in your gang?" "About three hundred," he replied. "Practically a Führer," the C. I. O. watcher snapped back.

The visitor to the Ford plant is deeply impressed with the cleanliness, the spaciousness, the smooth clock-like efficiency of the huge enterprise. But when one observes the arrogant strutting of the service men, their aloof and threatening silence, and the looks of resentment directed at them by the men in overalls; when one is told that a voter said to a coworker who was serving as a poll watcher, "I bet you think you're smart sitting down in the plant"; when a watcher sucking on an unlit pipe is ruled out lest he make the men "feel bad"; when, in other words, a chair and a cigarette emerge as the two most immediate desires of a River Rouge worker, one realizes why 97.4 per cent of Ford's 78,000 employees leaped at the chance to tell him that they don't like being treated as automatons.

ROSE M. STEIN

Pittsburgh, Pa., June 1

Let's Not Supply the Axis

Dear Sirs: I wish to express my appreciation of an editorial appearing in your issue of May 17 entitled No Henbane for Japan. Many of us are much concerned over the continued exportation of essential war materials to the Axis powers and feel that these shipments should be stopped immediately. It seems nothing short of criminal to continue to supply our enemies with steel, petroleum, and other war materials to use against Great Britain and possibly later against our own armed forces.

If this country is waging an all-out war against aggression, we should insist that American business firms join with our drafted men and boys now in army camps, and with our laborers engaged in production, in making whatever sacrifices are necessary to win the war. If the United States is helpless in controlling large international firms, the sooner we learn the facts the better; so that some type of world organization can be established which can control them.

I believe American sentiment on this matter is sufficiently aroused to insist upon proper action being taken by our State Department. Perhaps we need another national committee, one which might be called "The Committee to Stop Sending War Materials to the Axis Powers." *The Nation* would be performing a great public service if it launched a crusade to secure action on this matter.

D. C. SOWERS

Boulder, Col., June 6

Waiting for Leadership

Dear Sirs: Possibly your readers may be interested in this telegram which I have just sent to President Roosevelt:

> For twenty years everything has been too late. We dare not permit our navy to lie idle while our only possible ally bleeds slowly to death. Our people are ignorant of their danger. They await your leadership.
>
> UPTON SINCLAIR

Pasadena, Cal., May 28

A Natural Reluctance

Dear Sirs: It seems to me rather unjust that you should be condemning so harshly the OPM executives, particularly Mr. Knudsen, for their lack of cooperation in the present crisis in defense production. Men who have ruled industry for years can hardly be transformed overnight into big-hearted patriots just because it looks as if a distant crisis (it's way over in Europe, isn't it?) might remotely begin to affect this country some time.

One of the great inconsistencies of our capitalistic society is the encouragement we give the profit-seeking motive until disaster threatens, when we condemn industrial magnates for their natural reluctance to start throwing profits away—which is precisely what subcontracting would mean to Mr. Knudsen and his dollar-a-year brethren.

I entirely agree with you that some-

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thing must be done to loosen the grip of the dollar-a-year men on defense production, but I still do not condemn Mr. Knudsen and the others for their attitude. It is a natural outcome of years of monopoly and power. Few of us common wage-earners would act differently if we were in their shoes.

The obvious remedy is, of course, government control and supervision of defense contracting, such as exists in Great Britain.

H. C. FRANCIS

Chicago, June 9

Nazi Poles in London

Dear Sirs: Wladyslaw Malinowski's letter in your issue of May 31 could be construed as a confirmation rather than a refutation of my article in *The Nation,* Anti-Semitism in Exile, if it were not for its last surprising conclusion that I was unfair to the Polish people. In my article I drew a sharp distinction between the Polish people now actually under Nazi domination and the small group of Polish exiles in Great Britain. I even differentiated between the Socialist and reactionary exiles and made it quite clear that the Socialist press and speakers in Great Britain did not participate in the shameful anti-Semitic campaign. Mr. Malinowski confirms all these facts, but treats as entirely unimportant the activities of the anti-Semitic faction in England. Figures recently issued in official Polish quarters in London, however, showed that at least 50 per cent of the Polish National Council (the Polish parliament in exile) was outspokenly anti-Semitic. This section of the Polish people is far from insignificant, and its activities cannot be ignored.

The analogy which Mr. Malinowski draws between these anti-Semitic exiled Poles and the French "collaborators" with Hitler is not entirely complete, for whatever one may think of the Vichy collaborators, the fact remains that they are entirely at the mercy of the Nazis, whereas the Poles are conducting their campaign against the Jews on British soil. It was the shameless perversity of these Polish Nazis that prompted me to speak out in *The Nation,* not any political motive, still less any feeling of animosity for the enslaved Polish people, for whom I have the profoundest sympathy.

WILLIAM ZUKERMAN

New York, June 6

Release This Chinese Poet!

Dear Sirs: May I appeal to your readers for help in behalf of H. T. Tsiang, Chinese poet and patriot, for a period of years an earnest student in this country, now confined for nearly a year on Ellis Island awaiting deportation.

I have tried in vain to find out, in any clear and definite fashion, why this young man should be sent back to China, where in all probability he will be put to death. I can discover nothing but baffling technicalities.

It is my hope that legal proceedings now under way will accomplish his release. But an earlier, indeed immediate, release should be granted by executive authority. To this end I appeal to your readers to write to Secretary Perkins or to Thurman Arnold, of the Department of Justice, asking for action.

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

New York, May 21

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PETER STEVENS is the pseudonym of an American writer just returned from a year's stay in the Near East.

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